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JOHN EDWIN WATTS-DITCHFIELD

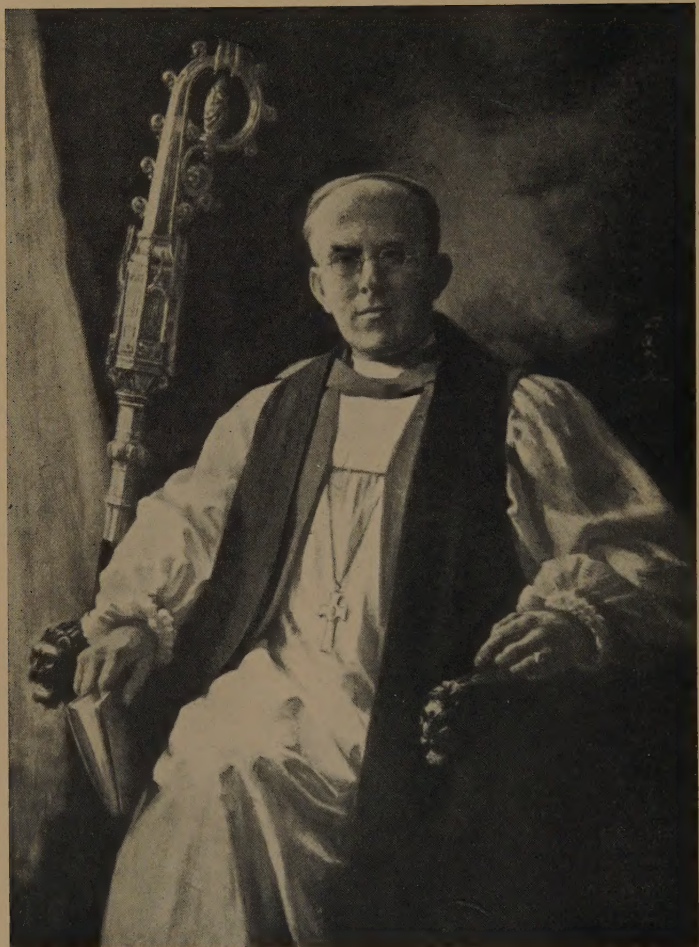


Photo. Grove Son and Boulton

THE RIGHT REVD. JOHN EDWIN WATTS-DITCHFIELD, D.D.
LORD BISHOP OF CHELMSFORD.

PRESENTATION PORTRAIT. 1920. (AT BISHOPSCOURT.)

BY G. HALL NEALE.

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JOHN EDWIN
WATTS-DITCHFIELD

FIRST BISHOP OF CHELMSFORD

BY

ELLIS N. GOWING

HODDER AND STOUGHTON
LIMITED LONDON

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PREFACE

MANY of the Bishop's friends felt that a record of his life would be an inspiration and encouragement to others. Because of my close association with the Bishop during some of the most important years of his life, and because of my personal relationship to him, it was considered that I had more ready access to the sources of knowledge from which the information necessary for such a life was to be obtained than any other person. Consequently I was requested to undertake the interesting but difficult task of preparing this short life.

The task would not have been attempted save for the incentive of the Bishop's old and trusted friend, Mr. W. G. Rushbrooke. During the preparation of the earlier chapters his wise counsel and kindly supervision encouraged me to go forward. His passing was a great loss.

It is impossible to acknowledge the help given by many friends, but I must place on record my appreciation of the assistance given in the reading of the manuscript and in the necessary corrections essential to accuracy of the Rev. E. A. Dunn and of the Rev. George Twentyman, two of the

Bishop's former colleagues at Bethnal Green ; of the Rev. Canon Sparrow Simpson ; of the Rev. F. A. Redwood, the domestic chaplain during the last years of the Bishop's life ; of Mr. S. C. Lambert ; and of Mr. F. D. L. Penny.

It has been difficult with so much material available, and with a life of such pronounced activity, to select that which was most helpful for the purpose of this book. Much—very much—has been omitted which may cause disappointment to many.

It was equally difficult to avoid extravagant language where such a life was concerned. I have tried to eliminate my personal feelings and opinions, and to present the man and his work at their correct value. For this reason I have quoted rather freely from extracts.

With all its imperfections I send it forth, as he would have wished, with the one motive and with the earnest prayer that it may inspire and encourage some to go forth to fresh endeavour and with renewed enthusiasm in the service of our common Lord, for the extension of His Kingdom on earth.

ELLIS N. GOWING.

PRITTLEWELL, ST. MATTHEW'S DAY,
21st September 1926.

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TABLE OF LEADING EVENTS

Born at Patricroft, 17th September 1861.

Received as a Wesleyan local preacher, 1881.

Confirmed in Manchester Cathedral, 22nd November 1888.

Removed to London, 1889.

Ordained deacon in St. Paul's Cathedral, 20th December 1891.

Became Assistant Curate of St. Peter's, Upper Holloway, 26th December 1891.

Married Miss Jane Wardell of Bow, 3rd September 1892.

Ordained priest in St. Paul's Cathedral, 18th December 1892.

Became Vicar of St. James-the-Less, Bethnal Green, 31st July 1897.

Published *Fishers of Men*, 1899.

Elected a member of the Bethnal Green Board of Guardians, 1899.

Opening of the Parochial Buildings, the Recreation Ground, the Men's Club, and the Medical Mission, 29th June 1901.

Opening of Sidney Street Mission, 7th December 1901.

Opening of Ridley House, 10th December 1904.

Organized Industrial Exhibition in Bethnal Green, 1904.

Inauguration of St. John's Hall, Durham, 1909.

Honorary Degree of Master of Arts conferred by the University of Durham, 21st June 1910.

Published *Here and Hereafter*, 1911.

C.E.M.S. Missioner to Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, 1912.

x JOHN EDWIN WATTS-DITCHFIELD

Lecturer in Pastoral Theology in the University of Cambridge,
1913.

Published *The Church in Action*, 1913.

Consecrated Bishop, St. Matthias' Day, 1914.

Enthronement in St. Mary's Cathedral, Chelmsford, St.
George's Day, 1914.

National Mission, 1916-1917.

Sermons in St. Paul's Cathedral, Holy Week, 1916.

Inauguration of the Crusade Fund, 1919.

Became a member of the House of Lords, 21st April 1920.

Primary Visitation, May 1920.

Lambeth Conference, May 1920.

President of the Church Congress, October 1920.

Presentation of his portrait, October 1920.

Became Chairman of the Council of the C.E.M.S., June 1922.

Presided at the Evangelical Conference at Coleshill, June
1922.

Presided at the Diocesan Synod, May 1923.

Letter to the Anglo-Catholic Congress, 30th June 1923.

Moved resolution in the Upper House of Convocation of
Canterbury on the reform of Ecclesiastical Courts,
4th July 1923.

Operation for appendicitis, 10th July 1923.

Death of the Bishop of Chelmsford, 14th July 1923.

Funeral Service in St. Mary's Cathedral, Chelmsford, and
interment in the Cathedral churchyard, 19th July 1923.

‘ Thine was the prophet’s vision ! Thine
The exultation, the divine
Insanity of noble minds,
That never falters nor abates,
But labours and endures and waits,
Till all that it foresees, it finds,
Or what it cannot find, creates ! ’

H. W. LONGFELLOW.

CHAPTER I

EARLY YEARS

‘ I AM the youngest son and child of John and Mary Ditchfield, and was born in Green Lane, Patricroft, on 17th September 1861.’

Thus John Edwin Watts-Ditchfield records the fact of his birth in his earliest diary.

That day was a happy one indeed in the home to which he came. For six years the parents had been without a son, their only boy having died within three weeks of his birth. So that the coming of the little John Edwin was the renewal of broken hopes.

The scene in the room after the birth of the second boy shows the character of the father, and indicates one of the chief influences that were to mould in after life the character of the son.

Taking the three girls, Alice aged twelve, Mary aged ten, and Martha aged eight, to see their baby brother, the father bade them kneel, and then poured out his soul to God in prayer. The eldest child never forgot that prayer, and throughout the boy's life remembered the homely words in which her father dedicated him to God, praying that he might be a blessing to many in future years, and a help to all with whom he came into contact.

John Ditchfield, the father, was born on 8th

August 1814, and was baptized in Warrington Parish Church on the 28th of the same month. He began to work at the age of eight in a cotton factory, and, like many other children in those days, worked for his employers no less than twelve hours and a half every day. Despite these long hours, the little fellow attended a night school for a short time. A pathetic proof of his eagerness for knowledge occurs in a subsequent reference to this period of his life. 'I paid a penny a week for twenty weeks for a new Bible which I soon read through.' In 1830 John was bound as an apprentice to a shoemaker in Stretford, and shortly afterwards became a Sunday School teacher in St. Matthew's Parish. He was one of the early pioneers of the Temperance Movement, and signed the pledge on 17th February 1835. On 22nd June of the same year he was confirmed in All Saints, Stretford, by Bishop Sumner, but in 1836 he joined the Wesleyan Church. Five years later he undertook definite church work, and was received on the full plan as a local preacher. It had been his wish to serve God in the ministry, but, though accepted as a missionary in 1841, no missionaries were sent out in that year, and thus the opportunity passed. Six years later he completed his training at the Borough Road Schools in South London, and secured his schoolmaster's certificate under the Committee of the Privy Council on Education. Then he was appointed to the Patricroft Higher Grade School as its first headmaster. This position he retained till his retirement in 1881.

Like James Nasmyth, the inventor of the steam

hammer, who had become his friend, he was keenly interested in the social conditions of the workers of his day. He is reported to have been a man of strong personality and indomitable courage, with a simple faith in God, and a remarkable power of prayer. What John Ditchfield had achieved in a life begun under conditions so unfavourable was a continual stimulus to the son, to whom habits of method and economy of time were perhaps a transmitted inheritance. Certain it is that the son treasured the letters he had received from his father to the day of his death. A few extracts may be given.

Writing on 9th December 1884 to his son—whom he always addressed as John Edwin—the father says :

‘ I believe in prayer, and in my daily petition one thing is, “ Lord, bless the lad ”—not for wealth, length of days, or worldly honour, but for God’s grace and blessing.’

Again, on 19th December 1884 :

‘ And with my blessing to you. You know pretty well what I should recommend you to do, John. A cup of milk is more easily knocked over than gathered up again. You will remember how I used to tell the scholars about *blotching* their *clean* copybooks. I daily remember you when on my knees.’

On 13th May 1885 he writes :

‘ DEAR JOHN EDWIN,—You now know the way to heaven as well as I can tell you—but it is one thing to *know*, and another to *do*. Do live by *rules*, let them be good, and *do* keep them. Examine yourself *every* night—I do, and long have done. You know much of my own

history ; I have not done as much good as I might have done, but I feel a great blessing in that I have wanted, and tried to be *useful* for good.'

Writing to his future daughter-in-law on 12th August 1892 :

' My beloved son has some of my maxims, one of which is :

" Let not our woe or bliss depend
On frown of foe or smile of friend,
Trust in God."

" It is better to *wear* out than to *rust* out."

" Be more ready to give than to receive."

An interesting document preserved and valued by the son is headed thus : ' My daily maxims which I have long tried to keep.'

'*First*.—Every day read a portion of Scripture, and private prayer three times.

'*Second*.—Cheerfully submit to God's providence and to all my troubles of life.

'*Third*.—Be as much good and as little trouble to others, in my social life, as possible. Neither give nor take *offence* ; be calm and kind to everybody ; teach by example rather than by precept.

'*Fourth*.—In my *talk*, never cavil, nor praise myself, nor dispraise others ; *kindly* with *care* name my *desires*, *opinions*, *questions*, or *troubles*.

'*Fifth*.—In all my *habits* of life, let all I *think*, *speak*, *read*, *write*, or *do*, be good and useful.

'*Sixth*.—Examine myself every night.'

A good mother's influence and training left their impress on the character of John Edwin. His love for her was deep and strong, and the bond between mother and son honoured unfail-

ingly by each. He acknowledged in after life the truth of what Mrs. Rowles Jarvis puts so well in her beautiful hymn :

‘ Next to His Son, to mortals given
With endless honour from above,
God gave to earth, in type of Heaven,
The wonder of a Mother’s love.’

There was indeed in her son, as more observers than one have noted, a remarkable blending of the woman with her tenderness and the man with his strength :

‘ A manhood fused with female grace
In such a sort, the child would twine
A trustful hand, unasked, in thine,
And find his comfort in thy face.’

His father spent many of his leisure hours in visiting the sick. On one occasion John Edwin, as he tells us, was left at the house of a very old woman whilst his father went to see another sick person to whose house he thought it ~~un~~advisable to take the boy. On the wall was a text to which old Esther Walmsley pointed and asked the boy to take it down and bring it to her. The child climbed on to a chair and did her bidding. She then read the text aloud, and asked him to repeat it. He repeated, ‘ Thou God seest me.’ ‘ When you are older,’ Esther Walmsley said, ‘ people will tell you that God is always watching you to see when you do wrong in order to punish you. I do not want you to think of it in that way, but I want you to take the text home and to remember all your life that God loves you so much that He cannot take His eyes off you.’ The boy accepted

the text with thanks, and repeated after her, ' God loves me so much that He cannot take His eyes off me.'

Old Esther Walmsley's gentle repudiation of the ordinary Christian's slander of the God of Love merits for her a long remembrance and perpetual honour to her name.

This incident made a deep impression on the little lad's mind, and when he became a bishop the text occupied a conspicuous place in his study, and he would often take the text down and tell the story to his Ordination candidates.

Those early years spent amidst the factory life of Manchester kindled in the growing lad a profound sympathy for the workers and gave him an understanding of their difficulties and such an appreciation of their needs and their half-unconscious aspirations as served him well in years to come. And a first reading of *Oliver Twist* filled him, young as he was, with a strong desire to work in some way or other in the poorer parts of London.

When it was necessary for him to choose a path in life he decided to become a teacher, and what more natural than that he should be bound for four years as a pupil teacher to his father? It was at this time that the definite decision to serve God was made. This is best told in his own words as recorded in his diary :

' I always had a desire to serve God ; but never gave Him my heart till January 1875, when at a special service the Rev. Humphrey Jutsum preached, and I decided to give myself, body, spirit and soul, to Him alone who has the right.'

On 9th January 1877, at the age of sixteen years, John Edwin preached his first sermon, his text being Acts ix. 6: 'And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?'

A year later his name appeared on the Bridge-water Plan, and he now began to preach frequently. In 1881 he preached in the new Wesleyan Chapel, Eccles, and was received by a unanimous vote of the September Quarterly Meeting. Of his experience at this time the Bishop told two humorous incidents. Being called upon to preach at a small chapel in an agricultural district, he chose as his text, 'A sower went forth to sow,' and he used to say, when telling the story, 'In my youthful innocence I thought I had done rather well. On the way home to the farmer's house where he was to have tea, his host was very silent and only replied in monosyllables to any remark made to him. Suddenly he stood still, and, facing the young preacher, said, "If ever thee praches that sermon again prache it in the town, where they know nowt aboot it."'

The other story was of another local preacher who went to take a farmhouse service on a very cold day. The local preacher wore gutta-percha boots because it had been snowing and the roads were very bad. The farmer's wife, with kindly thought, put an oven shelf in the bottom of the pulpit to warm the preacher's feet, with the result that it melted the soles. He managed to wrench the sole off one boot and to kneel on one knee. The other remained fast all through the service.

He waited till the congregation had gone and then said, 'Mrs. —, I've lost my sole.' 'I thought there was something wrong with thee,' was the reply, 'but nowt as bad as that.'

Very shortly after he had taken up these voluntary duties, a work was begun which was to be of lasting benefit to the Wesleyans in that district. Barton Wesleyan Chapel had long been too small for the congregation, and so several young men opened a tiny mission-room in New Lane. Since that day the work has continually grown until now there stands on the site of that mission-room a large Wesleyan Chapel, with 700 scholars in its Sunday School. One of the pioneers with John Edwin in this movement, Edwin Ashton, is an active worker in the chapel to-day.

It was here that a most successful Bible Class, known as the Junior Society Class, was formed, with a membership of over forty, under the leadership of 'Mr. John.' The members of that class still recall with gratitude their leader and the simple prayer used by each of them, 'God bless Mr. John, and make him a good man.'

Whilst the work was still in its infancy, it was decided to hold a Mission. During the week it snowed heavily, and on one of the evenings about half a dozen young men met at the Mission Hall to decide whether it would be advisable to hold the service in such unfavourable weather. There was never any doubt as to the decision, however, and the enthusiasts marched out with a large bell into the open space known as 'Moor Fields.' Ringing the bell to attract the attention of the

inhabitants of the neighbouring houses, they stood in snow almost up to their knees, whilst 'Mr. John' gave the invitation to attend the Mission. As a result of his appeal, some thirty people followed to the hall. Years afterwards the Bishop was reminded of the occasion by one of the men who responded to his challenge, and was there and then led to make the decision to serve Christ which resulted in his ordination. It was the sight of a young man standing in the midst of the snow and making so earnest an exhortation that constrained him to attend the service.

Thus early in life did the brave optimism that enabled him to triumph over difficulties show itself publicly in the character of the man who was to shoulder in the same glad and courageous spirit the heavy burden of episcopal responsibility, and to carry it faithfully to the end.

During his career as a teacher, he was for a short period on the staffs of Hamar Street Board School, Manchester, Peter Street Higher Grade School, Manchester, and the Seeley Commercial School.

In 1884 John Edwin gave up the teaching profession and began work as a local preacher and circuit evangelist at Gorton. The following year he accepted the call of the Wigton Wesleyan circuit to minister in the Silloth and Wigton district.

The best summary of the young preacher's work at this period is contained in an extract from a letter of commendation from one minister to another :

' Mr. J. E. Ditchfield has been with me twelve months in the capacity of Hired Local Preacher, and I can speak with confidence of his worth and work. He is a young

man of deep piety, blameless life, and fervent zeal, and with a fair ability which is growing and improving. He has an easy, simple, and natural way of speaking, and is an indefatigable visitor—the only fear being that he will labour beyond his strength.'

In 1887 he offered himself as a candidate for the Wesleyan ministry, and received the following letter, dated 28th July of that year, from the Wesleyan Methodist Conference :

'It gives me pleasure to inform you that the Conference has accepted your offer as a Candidate for the Ministry.

'Your name has been entered on the list for the Theological Institution and for Home Work.

'After the Allocation Committee has met, you will hear from the Governor of the College to which you will be designated, who will inform you of the place, and of the date of entrance.'

Accordingly he entered Headingley College, Leeds, and was most successful in the examination tests. At the conclusion of the training it was found that there were more students in the College than vacancies in the circuits. It was suggested, therefore, that some of the students, including John Edwin, should volunteer for service abroad. This was a grievous disappointment to him, for he was convinced that he was more fitted for service in a crowded centre of population in the home land. In response to his request for advice he received a letter, dated 26th June 1888, from one of the leading Wesleyan ministers, of which the following is an extract :

'I be more grieved than I can express, by learning the result of the Committee. Still, I can see nothing for it

but to submit, and accept it as the indication of the providential purpose of God. If I were twenty, I would certainly go to South Africa. I think the chances of usefulness and progress there, for ordinary men like most of us, are superior to those in this country, where everybody is familiar with Gospel ministrations, and few value them.'

The following additional extract from the same letter is suggestive of what was in the mind of John Edwin :

' I would *on no account* entertain the thought of leaving the old ship. With all her faults, she is the most seaworthy bark afloat. And I am persuaded that you would not get "naturalized" in any other body.'

Apparently this advice was accepted, and John Edwin volunteered for service in South Africa, for he received the following terse letter, dated 9th July 1888, from the Secretary of the Wesleyan Mission House in London: 'We are not likely to send out any more men to the Transvaal at present.' There was no alternative for him. He had to leave the College, and it appeared to him that the door of the Wesleyan ministry was consequently closed.

On 22nd November 1888, John Edwin was confirmed in Manchester Cathedral, and so began the life that was to be of such transcendent value in the Church of England. Thus does God guide His faithful and loyal follower. One door is closed in order that another may open, and that a wider sphere of work be offered to the man whom He has prepared for it.

CHAPTER II

ST. PETER'S, UPPER HOLLOWAY

IN January 1889, the Rev. J. Pullein Thompson, Vicar of St. Stephen's, North Bow, invited Watts-Ditchfield to come to London as his secretary. This invitation was accepted, and he remained with Mr. Pullein Thompson till his ordination as deacon in St. Paul's Cathedral by Bishop Temple on 20th December 1891. During this period, besides doing much useful work in the parish, especially in connexion with the Women's Bible Class, he attended lectures at St. John's College, Highbury, an institution in which throughout the remainder of his life he took a practical interest.

Six days after his ordination, on 26th December, he took up residence in Upper Holloway, having accepted a title from the Rev. J. F. Osborne, M.A., Vicar of St. Peter's, and he preached his first sermon in that church on the next day, his text being St. John i. 41, 'We have found the Messiah.'

On 18th December 1892 he was ordained priest in St. Paul's Cathedral by Bishop Temple.

His marriage with Miss Jane Wardell, the daughter of Thomas Lax Wardell of Bow, had already been solemnized in his old church of St. Stephen's on the 3rd of September, Mr. Osborne officiating.

It was at St. Peter's that he began that work amongst men the exceptional nature and results of which rapidly attracted attention. Not many curacies would have offered him the opportunities which opened before him at St. Peter's ; and he recognized in the events that led him there the clear guidance for which he had prayed. Belief in divine guidance as the answer to prayer was the sheet-anchor of his life.

The vicar soon perceived that his assistant curate was no ordinary man, and that he possessed a gift amounting to genius in the art of winning souls for Christ. His kindly sympathy encouraged his colleague to go forward in his endeavours, and gave to him the necessary freedom of action without which the Church would have been in danger of losing one of her finest workers. Throughout life the bishop never ceased to speak of his first and only vicar in terms of affection and gratitude.

The circumstances and environment of his early days had given him a thorough insight into the difficulties of life in crowded areas, so that his natural sympathies were deepened and quickened by personal knowledge. He longed to get the men around him into living touch with organized Christianity, as the best mode of bringing them to Christ. It was with this object in view that while he was still an assistant curate he decided to put into operation his idea of a special and regular weekly service for men. To quote from the first annual report after its inauguration :

‘ Feeling the great need for a service, at once bright, hearty, and simple, to which men of all classes could be

invited, and at which they could be made to feel at home, a number of men of various trades, occupations, and classes were invited to a meeting in September 1892. At this it was decided to hold what is now so well known as St. Peter's Men's Service. Twelve hundred invitations were sent out, and in response one hundred and twenty men attended the first Sunday's service, at which the aim and object of the service was defined as an effort to lead men to a higher, purer, and nobler life in God.'

The object is put forth more fully in the second annual report :

'The aim and object of this service is to lead men through Christ to a higher, purer, and nobler life in God, and to prove that Christianity is not a failure, but the one thing that can make a true man—a gentleman, indeed, in the highest sense—one who is all that he ought to be in himself, and does all that he ought to do for his brother men. To accomplish this, the character of the service is distinctly a religious one, while at the same time it is one in which all can join, and which all can thoroughly enjoy.'

The St. Peter's Men's Service became a vital force in the life of the parish and neighbourhood, and was an incentive to many other parishes to do likewise.

Confident in the innate goodness of man, and convinced of his real if unrecognized desire for a high and noble life, the pioneer in this sphere of service was willing to spend and to be spent in showing him how to realize his desire, and he expected others to be ready to stand at his side and share in the privilege of his mission. The genuine sincerity of the young clergyman appealed irresistibly to many who watched his eager enthusi-

asm, till they too caught fire and the arduous work was begun.

Before the first service was held, posters with the announcement—startling for those days—that the Rev. J. E. Watts-Ditchfield was going to preach on Sunday afternoon ‘*to men only*,’ and that he would preach on ‘Rifle Shots,’ aroused curiosity, and brought to St. Peter’s 120 men of all churches, and some of no church. Then, after an address which, with its happy blend of earnestness and humour, compelled attention from start to finish, the speaker said, ‘I may not remember all your faces ; but if I should pass any of you after to-day without recognition, I beg you to give me a nod, or, better still, to stop and speak to me.’

When the Benediction was pronounced, the preacher made his way quickly to the porch, and there shook hands and exchanged a few words with every one of his hearers as they passed out. And so was initiated the St. Peter’s hand-shake, which has thus from the beginning been the unfailing accompaniment to the Men’s Service. When that winter was gone and spring was half-way through, the question arose whether the services should be given up during the summer months. It was a critical moment, but the right decision for this parish was come to, and the Men’s Service has been continued without a break from that day to this.

It must not be supposed, however, that this new departure in the work of the Church was effected easily or without opposition, whether open or insidious. But kindness and courtesy, and a

never-failing considerateness for the feelings of opponents, and the obvious value of the results attending the new methods, robbed the opposition of its vitality, till it gradually faded away and left more and more recruits ready to join the campaign.

Through good and evil report, not over elated by success nor unduly depressed by failures, the assistant curate went on his way, unconventional and original in his methods, but single-hearted in his devotion to his Master and his Master's work. No device that would win men for Christ was to be untried. Like Charles Wesley, who did not see why all good tunes should belong to the devil, he did not see why the devil should have all the advantages of advertisement ; so he advertised his sermons, and roused curiosity by giving them provocative titles such as 'The Man up a Tree,' 'The Man under a Bush,' 'Long Odds,' 'The Crooked Woman,' 'The Man with the Swift Tongue and Slow Foot,' 'Notice to Quit.'

'One Sunday afternoon,' writes an old member of the service, 'two of our men, on coming from the service, crossed the road, and in doing so met two strangers coming from the opposite direction. On seeing such an unusual sight as hundreds of men pouring out of a church on a fine Sunday afternoon, one turned to the other and said, "Why, Jim, there must be a barrel of ale in that church."'

And once a stranger who had just come into the parish, on being accosted in a friendly way in the street, replied by the question, 'Are you Mr. Ditchfield?' 'Yes.' 'Then I wish you had not spoken to me, for I've lost a bob over you.' It

seemed that before leaving his old parish he had accepted a bet from a fellow-workman that he would not be three weeks in St. Peter's before he would be 'caught by the parson,' and as it happened he had not been in the parish one week before he was caught.

Before the Service was firmly established, and during the critical stage of its early beginnings, a change in the churchwardenship gave the curate the assistance of an influential friend in the person of Mr. W. G. Rushbrooke, Headmaster of St. Olave's School, Southwark, who became an able assistant and wise counsellor in carrying out the plans he was forming for his work.

Watts-Ditchfield was particularly anxious that the privileges of the Church sacraments should be valued by those who attended the Men's Service, and in order to emphasize the importance of Holy Baptism he arranged that his first and only child, Dorothy Mary, born on 9th March 1895, should be baptized by the vicar at the Men's Service, and the baptism took place on 21st April of the same year.

In his desire to minister to the material as well as the spiritual needs of the members of the Service, various societies and clubs were formed. The Sick, Burial, and Annual Distribution Society, with a membership of 400, enabled men to make some provision against sickness and death. The Thrift Society, with 800 members, taught its own useful lesson in a practical manner, whilst the Christmas Club ensured a really happy Christmas for very many families in the parish. Yeoman

service in the organization and management of these clubs was rendered by Mr. W. G. Hart and Mr. A. Petford, two of the original members of the Men's Service, both of whom are still actively helping. The Ramblers' Club was of educational value : for on Saturday afternoons the members visited places of historic and national interest under the guidance of some of the well-known men of the day, and also made excursions to some of the nearer country places famed for their beauty. Thus Canon Scott Holland guided a party over St. Paul's, the Archbishop of Canterbury gave the members an enjoyable afternoon at Lambeth Palace, and Dr. Welldon invited them to Harrow.

In order to meet the requirements of the younger and athletic members, clubs for cricket and football were organized and regularly supported.

To give the men an opportunity of spending the evenings in healthy and pleasant surroundings, there was a reading-room and a library, and rooms where such games as draughts, chess, dominoes, and bagatelle could be played. Here also the men could obtain coffee, cocoa, and light refreshments at a moderate cost. This club was open each evening, whilst every Saturday evening there was an excellent entertainment for the men and their wives. The success of the effort was shown by the fact that over two hundred men availed themselves of the privilege of membership. The annual excursion to such popular resorts as Clacton was, of course, a day eagerly anticipated and much enjoyed.

Amidst so much to occupy the thoughts and time

of the men, the duty of service to others was by no means overlooked, but was enforced in a very practical manner. A fund was established for the provision of dinners for poor children during the winter months, and was a real help to the poorer people in the parish.

The wide-embracing charity that deemed no human need outside its range included such extra-parochial objects as the Hospital Sunday Fund, the Bishop of London's Fund, Uganda, Sierra Leone, the Fresh Air Fund, the sufferers from the Coal Strike, the sufferers from the Audley Colliery Disaster, the Home for the Blind, the Railway Servants' Orphanage, the Church Army, and many another appealing need. And so it came about that before December 1923 the aggregate amount of money raised by the various societies started by Watts-Ditchfield, and distributed in the promotion of health and happiness among the people in St. Peter's Church and those whom they befriended, exceeded £125,000.

Although Watts-Ditchfield always said that the most useful work he could do for women was to make the men better husbands, a special service 'for women only' was regularly held on Tuesday afternoons. Once, when talking to the men, he described the origin of the Women's Service thus :

'Do you know what started the Women's Service here? An uneducated man came to me one day and said, "When I married my missus she was a bit religious, but I soon knocked all that out of her; but can't you do something for the missus like you do for us?" "Well," I said, "I will try."'

Although convinced of the usefulness of these organizations, experience convinced Watts-Ditchfield that the Church of England system of parochial visiting was the best method of reaching the family and the individual. In the course of such visitation he interested himself in the recreations and hobbies of the men, and was often able to assist and to encourage them by useful information gleaned from many quarters.

‘Get to *know* the men,’ he used to say. ‘This can only be done by visiting them in their homes, and reaching them *individually*.’

In this way much of the prejudice against organized Christianity and its workers was overcome. Even he, however, had occasionally to meet that prejudice, and upon one occasion, when he was visiting, a man replied to his greeting, ‘If there’s one thing I hate, it’s a parson.’ Needless to say that the frankness of the speaker was outmatched by the sympathetic frankness of this particular parson, and a new friendship was struck. In speaking to the Clergy Home Mission Union in the Chapter House of St. Paul’s, in December 1894, Watts-Ditchfield took the opportunity to emphasize the importance of parochial visiting. ‘If our clergy could drop half their meetings during the winter and visit at least three times a week, from seven to ten o’clock at night, it would be a good thing.’

The *St. Peter’s Magazine* for August 1923 summarizes this aspect of his work as follows :

‘The curate certainly had strange ideas : he actually thought it his duty to know about everything that was

being done in the parish, particularly in the public-houses. At one time he positively seemed to haunt the public-houses, and he had so much humour, and such obvious good-humour, that the publican began to feel that he was a friend rather than an enemy.

‘His intimacy and helpfulness in sorrow-stricken homes, the constant acts of timely but unlooked-for kindness done to this one and that one who could not have imagined themselves to have a place in that crowded memory, forced the conclusion that here was indeed a man who trod in the footsteps of Him who went about doing good.’

Another plan that he found most useful was to announce that he would be at home from 5.30 to 7.30 each Saturday evening for any man to visit him who wished to do so. In response to this invitation as many as twenty to twenty-five men have been to see him on one evening seeking advice on mental and spiritual difficulties. This meant a very heavy tax on his powers and considerable inconvenience in the home life. But the enthusiastic co-operation of his wife and her cheerful readiness to do her part in what she, like her husband, realized to be a work of the profoundest value, helped the men to come into personal touch with their clergyman in his own home; for all committee meetings were held there, and the men looked forward with pleasure to these opportunities for social intercourse with the assistant curate and his wife.

His activities were, however, by no means confined to St. Peter's. His correspondence rapidly increased, his counsel was constantly being asked

by other clergymen. And as a result missions were conducted, sermons preached, addresses given, and letters written for many another parish near and far. Constitutionally delicate as he was, it was inevitable that under the strain of such ever-widening responsibilities his health should suffer, and in 1896 matters became so serious that his medical advisers insisted on a sea voyage and a visit to Egypt. On 12th December 1896 he sailed from Tilbury on the *Canton*. The diary of this voyage and the subsequent time spent in Egypt and the Holy Land shows how fully the historic significance and the many interesting features of the life and customs of the day were appreciated by him. Throughout, the expressions of thanksgiving to Almighty God for His many and great mercies are characteristic of the man.

‘When I stepped ashore, I stood with hat off for a moment and thanked God for the great mercies I had received on the way, and for safely reaching my destination.’

‘Reached Luxor. Went straight to Church service. Opening hymn, “Thine for ever, God of Love.”’

‘I do thank God for all His mercies. What am I that He should be mindful of me!’

In other entries can be seen the keen sense of humour which was so helpful to the man himself, and made him such desirable company.

On one occasion the doctor sent a note saying that he wished him to remain in bed till he came and examined him. The Arab delivered the note to the wrong man, who remained in bed the whole day whilst the doctor could not understand why

his patient had ignored his instructions and gone for a donkey ride.

Being rowed across the river by the natives he was interested and amused to hear them chanting most solemnly : ' Ally Sloper, Ally Sloper, Ally Sloper.' He inquired the meaning of it, and discovered that an Englishman had taught them these words, saying that they meant ' May the blessing of Allah rest on the great white queen,' and if it were sung to Englishmen they would be so pleased that backsheesh would be given more generously.

Apparently Watts-Ditchfield became quite an enthusiastic donkey-rider, for there is an interesting note on the keen disappointment that he experienced when he found he was unable to take part in the donkey races for which he and his fellow-tourists had been preparing.

On his homeward journey, which allowed him a memorable three weeks in Italy, he was joined in Switzerland by his friend, Mr. Rushbrooke, and completed the tour in his company, arriving in London on 3rd May 1897, after an absence of about five months. His welcome home by the beloved men of his parish was an occasion never to be forgotten.

His diary closes with the significant entry :

' How good God has been. He has preserved my going out and my coming in.'

The enforced absence for so long from the work to which he was so devoted, and the reason for that absence, must have proved a matter for much serious if not anxious thought. Yet how wonder-

fully God was preparing His servant for the work that awaited him.

Not only was his bodily strength being renewed for further service ; but amid the wonders of Egypt and in the sacred spots so closely associated with our Lord's earthly ministry his mind had leisure for quiet thought, meditation, and prayer, and the result was a re-creation of the spirit and a deeper understanding of the voice of Him that calleth.

Extracts from the diary emphasize this :

' To-day felt the voice of God calling me to a greater work in the future.

' Oh, may God help me ! '

' About six o'clock went on roof of hotel, and as I saw the spot where Elijah prayed, I prayed that God might cast all evil out of me, and send me back to be a blessing. " He shall guide you unto all truth." I do feel God has some great work for me to do.'

' " Thou shalt be a blessing." That is the promise. May I do nothing to hinder its fulfilment or to postpone it.'

CHAPTER III

VICAR OF ST. JAMES-THE-LESS, BETHNAL GREEN

THE voice that had spoken in the silence of Egypt and amid the sacred surroundings of the Holy Land was soon to be heard through the medium of the Church.

To Watts-Ditchfield the call of God was no idle phrase. It was the most vital force in his life, and only in implicit obedience to what he believed to be the revealed will of God was any important step in life taken. He had already been called once before to decide whether it was God's will for him to continue the work at St. Peter's, or to serve Him in another sphere. In March 1895 the trustees had offered him the living of St. James, Wolverhampton. Writing in reply he says :

‘ Above all I made the question a matter of most serious thought and earnest prayer. On Saturday I went to Wolverhampton. Mr. Stuart was kindness itself, and took the greatest pains in placing before me the real condition of the parish. I walked the streets—I visited both churches and schools, and was told of all the various organizations at work. And now what is the result ? Personally I feel that St. James's is a splendid sphere of work, and one in which a great work for God could be carried on, *but*—and it is with a great deal of regret that I say so—I feel I cannot do other than decline the offer.’

‘ Many reasons there are in favour of my accepting the living, but there are many more against it. The chief reason is that I do not in any sense realize the call of God to go there. I have sought for it and prayed, but it seems as if Acts xvi. was being enacted over again—“ They assayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not.” Without this clear indication of God’s call I dare not go, and I am sure you would not have me go.

‘ A second reason, urged by several of my friends, is, that having made a somewhat special study of London problems and their peculiar difficulties, I ought not to throw away the experience thus gained, although of course this would help rather than hinder any work in a provincial town. Still they argue that with a London with three millions of people never entering a place of worship, those who have by the blessing of God got even the slightest hold on any corner, ought not to let it go, unless there is a very distinct call of God indeed. This as I say I have not had, and therefore I cannot, I dare not, say anything else but “ *No.* ” ’

The decision he was called upon to make shortly after his return from Egypt was of a different nature. The Bishop of London (Dr. Creighton) wrote to him on 18th June 1897, thus :

‘ MY DEAR MR. WATTS-DITCHFIELD,—I write to propose to you that you should undertake the charge of the benefice of St. James-the-Less, Bethnal Green, which is shortly to be vacated by the retirement of Mr. Moon. In making this proposal I am actuated by a desire to secure for that part of my diocese the services of one who has proved himself fitted to deal with the class which needs specially to be reached.

‘ I may further say that I should not have made the proposal had I not known that the Vicarage House is in a healthy situation,

‘ I can but commit my proposal to your consideration with the help of God.—Yours truly, M. LONDON.’

On the one hand there was the Men’s Service at St. Peter’s. After five years’ arduous and continuous toil men had been gathered into the Kingdom of God. There was still a wide field for service here, and the work was capable of much development and growth. On the other hand, his bishop had made the offer, the sphere of service was in the East End of London, where his experience would be of incalculable help to him, the problems being similar in many respects to those solved so successfully at St. Peter’s ; above all, he felt God’s urgent call for service in the parish of St. James-the-Less.

Correspondence with the bishop and consultation with friends who were in a position to give helpful advice, supplemented by earnest prayer and careful thought, convinced Watts-Ditchfield that his duty was to accept the living. The task that lay before him was such as to affright one of less courageous spirit, or one who had not the same profound belief in the guidance of God and of His abiding Presence.

Extracts of letters received from the churchwarden and one of the sidesmen give a slight impression of the state of the parish :

‘ I wish to tell you that I rejoice to know that you have accepted the appointment to our church of St. James-the-Less. From the few items of information respecting you and your work that have reached me I venture to believe that it is you for whom some of us have waited very patiently for many years past. The state of spiritual

torpor into which the parish has been allowed to sink is an awful fact to contemplate, but, with God's gracious help, I believe there will be an awakening and that your work here will be abundantly blessed. I wish to assure you of my intention of supporting you in any way that may be possible with the limited powers that I possess and time that I may have at my disposal ; and to assure you also of my sympathy in the courageous work you have undertaken and prayers for your guidance.'

' I only regret that you have to come to so forlorn a place. I trust that by God's blessing you will soon be able to make a change in all its surroundings.'

Commenting on the appointment the *Hollo-way and Hornsey Press* had the following significant paragraph :

' To any one having a knowledge of church working the magnitude of the task Mr. Watts-Ditchfield has before him is appalling. It will take years of hard uphill work to pull the church abreast of the times and perfect its organization. The world in these sceptical days is apt to sneer when a clergyman accepts a " call " and to wax satirical when they hear him speak of the " great wrench " it will be for him to part with those he is leaving. But where a man accepts a " call " which involves the amount of uphill work which the Rev. J. E. Watts-Ditchfield is leaving to face at St. James's, Bethnal Green, even the bitterest sceptic and the most confirmed sneerer must fain admit the sincerity of the man and of the expression. Mr. Watts-Ditchfield's departure will be a sad loss to St. Peter's ; but no man with his talent for organization and power for usefulness has the moral right to decline the opportunity when it comes of using them in a still wider sphere.'

St. James-the-Less was a parish of 11,000 people who lived for the most part in the narrow streets situated between Green Street and Old Ford Road. The houses were built in terraces, with their front doors opening on the streets, the housing conditions being deplorable. A very large proportion of the men were casual labourers at the docks, with a small and irregular wage, or engaged in equally uncertain modes of employment. In an overcrowded and unhealthy environment numbers of the parishioners—women as well as men—were workers in the sweated industries. Here also could be seen hand looms, from which some of the finest weaving was sent forth to the large business houses of the city.

The streets, in many instances blind alleys, were crowded with children, ill-kept, under-fed, and poorly clad. The church was situated in St. James's Road, immediately opposite the Chest Hospital, and in close proximity to one of the lungs of the East End, Victoria Park. It was a sombre building, inefficiently lighted, with very large galleries, old-fashioned family pews, the whole fabric being in urgent need of repair. It suffered much in contrast with the artificial brightness and warmth of the numerous public houses in the district. On one side was the vicarage, which was all too small for its purpose, and on the other side a school for girls, with a small residence attached. In rear of these buildings was a dilapidated churchyard, of which the principal use seemed to be the reception of refuse from the surrounding houses. Beyond the churchyard was a small school for boys.

This was the parish to which Watts-Ditchfield was inducted by the Archdeacon of London on the evening of 31st July 1897, in the presence of a large congregation, including a considerable number of his friends from St. Peter's. In the course of his address the Archdeacon said :

' The Bishop of London has taken great pains and care to find out one who would work the parish of St. James-the-Less most faithfully, and I do not think among the younger clergy in the diocese of London any one has stood forward with so much success and distinction and with so much blessing on his work as your new Vicar.

' The particular work in which Mr. Ditchfield has been engaged is among working men in the north of London. There have been many efforts made of late years to interest working men in Christianity, and in all kinds of moral progress. I do not know of any place where these efforts have met with such marked success as at St. Peter's, Upper Holloway. The work has only been going on for four or five years, and yet every Sunday afternoon at the Men's Service there is a congregation of seven or eight hundred worshippers ready to receive instruction in holy things, and to record their resolution before God to lead a better life, and to identify themselves with God's Church upon earth. That service has been an encouragement to other clergy to attempt a similar work.'

' It may be that new ideas and plans will suggest themselves to our minds when we have begun. We cannot go on in the old grooves. That there should be new plans for the extension of the work none would wish more earnestly than he to whom you have said good-bye. These plans your Vicar will develop.

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‘ But he is a man of so much zealous energy, that if you do not help him, he will soon wear himself out. In this parish there ought to be five curates ; but this is impossible. We cannot aim at such a high ideal. If your Vicar should have two curates it is as much as we can expect, but he should find among you many helpers.

‘ Remember that what you can do will be a help to the Vicar and, if you do it, he will not feel that the whole burden is on his own shoulders, but that every member of the congregation—young and old—is a worker.’

It was abundantly clear to Watts-Ditchfield that there was urgent necessity for extensive repairs and alterations in the church itself. Mr. Elijah Hoole, F.R.I.B.A., was called in as architect, and under his able supervision the structural alterations were carried out. Whilst the work was in progress, the Rev. P. F. Baldwin, who had been appointed assistant curate, held the services in the schools, until the new vicar could be spared from his old parish.

On Sunday, 26th September, the ministry of Watts-Ditchfield closed at St. Peter's, and his last sermon as assistant curate was preached. On Sunday, 10th October, he returned to give his farewell address to the Men's Service, a few sentences of which can be quoted :

‘ I do not know that I have ever experienced such difficulty as I have to-day in trying to think what I shall say to you, because it is a day that I shall remember as long as I live. For five years we have worked together in this service, and God has blessed our labours abundantly,

and now the time has come to address you for the last time.

‘ I have felt ever since I was a boy that I had a special mission for aggressive work amongst men. Just as some men feel in their hearts that they are led to labour in China or Africa, so I felt when not quite in my teens that God was calling me to labour amongst the working men of this country. And when the opportunity presented itself I felt that God had placed it there, and I had simply to follow the guidance of His Will, and so this Men’s Service was commenced. There have been unusual methods connected with the work here, but this is characteristic of Christianity, characteristic of our Lord. We read of Jesus actually in a boat teaching the multitude, and also of His healing a man let down from the roof of a building. So all along the Church’s history we find great movements marked by unusual methods. The lives of Luther, Wesley, Whitfield, and in latter days, Moody, are only a few examples of this.’ . . . ‘ As I look round this church this afternoon, I think of the tremendous responsibility that rests upon you. God has given you a unique opportunity. Don’t let anything interfere with the usefulness and progress of this work.’ . . . ‘ You must be united in all your undertakings, and you must be earnest in your efforts.’ . . . ‘ I beseech you to present your body and soul a living sacrifice to God.’

On Tuesday, 12th October, a social gathering was held in Holloway Hall to bid farewell to Mr. Watts-Ditchfield and to wish him God-speed in the work upon which he had recently entered, The Archdeacon of London presided over a large gathering of about nine hundred people. The formal proceedings were opened by the chairman, who called upon Mr. Schirges, the secretary of the

Men's Service, to read the following framed and illuminated address :

‘ ST. PETER’S MEN’S SERVICE

(Highgate Hill)

‘ To the Rev. J. E. WATTS-DITCHFIELD, Vicar of St. James-the-Less, Bethnal Green.

‘ On the eve of your leaving the scene of your labours during the past six years—

‘ WE, the Committee of the St. Peter’s Men’s Service, commemorating to-day the fifth anniversary of the commencement of these “ Services for Men Only,” desire to offer you an expression of our sincere gratitude, and of our deep personal affection. For five years your work has been carried on in spite of difficulties that would have daunted a less strenuous faith and crushed a less hopeful spirit. But we of the Parish, as well as many beyond its boundaries, have cause to thank God for the ardour and enthusiasm of the late curate of St. Peter’s. Whilst recognizing our inability adequately to express our indebtedness for the work instituted by you five years ago, and carried on till now with a perseverance and zeal that has never flagged, it would ill become us to allow the present occasion to pass without placing on permanent record our gratitude to Almighty God for the great privilege of being permitted, in however slight a degree, to share the burden of your toil, and we desire at the same time to thank you for the quick sympathy, the delicate friendliness, and the ceaseless interest which you have exhibited to us one and all ; you have indeed been a brother to us, and as you leave us for another and a wider sphere we join in united prayer that by the blessing of God you may be spared in health and activity for many years of useful life.’

Mr. Rushbrooke, in presenting the address,

together with a cheque which had been subscribed by the parishioners, congregation, and members of the Men's Service generally, said as People's Warden he was in a position to say that the work Mr. Watts-Ditchfield had done at St. Peter's had required a combination of qualities which had not been, and could not be, adequately set forth within the limits of that short address.

The man, however, was greater still than his work, and they who had seen him rise to every opportunity and meet and master every emergency, felt that if he would but husband his own health and strength, he would be found equal to any position to which God might call him hereafter.

The chairman said that he had watched, during the last five years, with the greatest sympathy, the work which had been carried on by Mr. Watts-Ditchfield, and he also knew how deeply Dr. Temple, the present Archbishop of Canterbury, and the present Bishop of London, Dr. Creighton, valued and esteemed that very important work.

It was a work that had become known throughout the length and breadth of the Church of England, because it had been, perhaps, the most prominent of all those efforts which had been made by the Church for her sons, the working men. It was very hard for his hearers to bid Mr. Watts-Ditchfield farewell, but fortunately their old friend was not going very far away. He hoped they would not grudge Mr. Watts-Ditchfield to his new parish where his efforts were so much needed.

A further presentation of a silver-plated tea and coffee service was made to Mr. Watts-Ditchfield

on 15th November, in appreciation of the services which he had rendered to the Temperance cause under the auspices of the Church of England Temperance Society. Represented at this meeting, and participating in the presentation, were the members of the Good Templars Junction Road Congregational and of the Archway Road Wesleyan Temperance Societies.

The aggressive ministry of Watts-Ditchfield at Bethnal Green began with the re-opening of St. James-the-Less on Friday evening, 22nd October, when the Bishop of London preached to a crowded congregation. It was difficult for those who knew the church to realize that such a transformation had taken place in so short a time. Extending into the body of the church a chancel had been built, in which were massive oak choir and clergy stalls, with carved prayer desks. The approach to the chancel was by means of three marble steps from the floor of the nave ; a broad pavement of stone mosaic work led up to the sanctuary, which was enclosed with brass rails. An alabaster retable had been let into the wall above the altar, and over this were four mosaics representing the emblems of the evangelists, whilst three new stained-glass windows were to be seen in the apse of the sanctuary. The organ, moved to the east end of the south aisle, had been completely renovated, and improved by the addition of new stops and pneumatic action, the keyboard being on a level with the choir stalls. This was enclosed by a carved oak screen, similar to that which enclosed the choir vestry in a corresponding position on the

north side of the chancel. The seating of the church had been effectively dealt with, and the accommodation increased by new seats in the galleries.

The exterior of the church had the same thorough treatment. The roof had been re-slatted, the stone work renewed, a lightning conductor installed, the drains re-laid, the windows repaired, and wire guards fixed to protect them. Provision was made to avoid the possibility of accident by widening the exits, the doors being made to open outwards.

Thus a sum of £4000 was expended on this work, almost the whole amount being raised by the new vicar from friends outside the parish.

With the church restored, Watts-Ditchfield set about the preparation for a Men's Service. The necessity for such a service was demonstrated by a simple incident which happened during the early days at Bethnal Green. A boy of fourteen was invited to associate himself in some way with the church. 'Why,' replied the boy, 'religion is only for kids. If religion is any good, why doesn't my father go to church or chapel? But he doesn't, he only sends the kids.'

On Sunday, 28th November, the first of these services was held in St. James-the-Less, and the response was splendid. From the date of inauguration this Men's Service has been held Sunday by Sunday, summer and winter, up to the present time.

Following the precedent established at St. Peter's, a service for women was held each Tuesday

afternoon at three o'clock. An interesting story is told of Watts-Ditchfield when on his rounds to gather in recruits.

One afternoon he called at the house of a poor woman who made her living by mangling, and invited her to go to the Women's Service. 'I'm sorry I can't, sir,' was the reply. 'I've just had this basket of mangling come in, and it's got to be delivered before to-morrow morning.' 'Never mind,' said Watts-Ditchfield, 'you get ready for church and I'll do the mangling.' 'Oh, you can't mangle them,' she said in surprise. 'Yes, I can. You go and get ready and leave the mangling to me.'

The vicar finished the basket whilst the woman was getting ready, and as a sequel to that incident the congregation was permanently increased by one.

This instance of his direct method of dealing with difficulties appealed to the parishioners, and many were attracted to the church and eventually won for Christ by similar unconventionalities.

Entering a shoemaker's shop, he invited the cobbler to the Men's Service on the following Sunday.

'Not me,' said the man, 'I'm not going to church to hear the Ten Commandments, and then say, "Lord have mercy upon us and incline our hearts to keep this law." They're out of date, like the rest of the Bible. God never spoke them. All those old things have been proved wrong long ago, and no one is expected to keep them.' 'If

that is so,' replied the vicar, ' I 'm rather pleased, for I badly want a pair of new shoes and these are my size ' ; and taking up a pair of shoes in the shop window, he walked away, and the cobbler hastily followed after him.

The Christmas festival rapidly drew nigh, and the poor folk of the parish began to realize that they had a practical Christian in their vicar, with a great depth of sympathy and an understanding of their position and their need. The first Christmas he spent at Bethnal Green was a manifestation of this, and each succeeding Christmas made it clearer still.

But as the years went by, the poorer parishioners were to experience more fully the genuine humanity of the man, not only at this particular season, but throughout the whole year in times of sickness and privation.

The generous response of the readers of the *Home Words* to an appeal issued by that journal, instituted that which became a characteristic feature of the St. James-the-Less Christmas, viz. the ' Robin ' dinners. During that Christmas, five hundred of the poorest children were made happy for at least one afternoon. As the school-room could only accommodate two hundred and fifty at once the dinner was divided into two sections—one dining at three and the other at six o'clock. The dinner (served by Messrs. Lockhart) was excellent, and consisted of hot beefsteak pudding (one for each child), potatoes, plum pudding, and coffee. If the donors could only have walked round the room how thankful they

would have been that they had contributed to the fund—mingled perhaps with sorrow that they had not contributed more. There was a child present whose father and mother were both blind, the mother being totally deaf as well. Think of the home in such a case, dirty and untidy, and filled with a large family, with practically no one to look after them. There could have been seen another child whose mother died a short time ago through drink, the husband having deserted her. He had now come back to his children, but was scarcely ever sober. And so a visit to the various tables from child to child, each *only* a child, but a child with a sad history. Surely one dinner like this justified the effort. After the dinner a short service was held in the church, when the vicar, in a few words, tried to let the children realize the love of Jesus to them and His care for little children. The faces of the children, wan and pinched, yet for the moment lighted up with gladness, was an index showing how greatly the treat had been enjoyed. ‘Please, sir, may we come again to-morrow?’ said one poor child. Alas! the answer had to be ‘No,’ and till another year many of the children did not see the like again.

To those who knew Watts-Ditchfield in his parochial life one of the happiest days of the year was that on which the ‘Robin’ was held. In after years the number of children was extended to a thousand. The distribution of the invitations was a matter for earnest thought and painstaking care. The list of children in the parish was carefully gone through, and the claims of the indi-

vidual child investigated with the help of the staff of clergy and lay workers.

On the day itself the organization was perfect in every detail. To see the vicar on the platform of the large hall, with five hundred children before him at each sitting, and the long chains of workers ready to pass the hot dishes to the children without any delay, to witness the happy smile on his face as he gained complete control of that mass of juvenile humanity by means of the game, 'Simon says—hands up,' etc., is one of the most pleasing recollections of a man with a big soul and an unlimited store of human sympathy.

The same thorough but humane system of organization was shown in his distribution of relief to the deserving poor. Indiscriminate, promiscuous giving was sternly discountenanced, but no case of real need ever made its appeal in vain in the parish of St. James-the-Less, whilst the utmost consideration was given to the preservation of the self-respect of the beneficiary.

CHAPTER IV

BUILDING OPERATIONS

WITH the rapid development of parochial life and the establishment of new organizations the inadequacy of the two small school buildings to meet the needs of the parish became more and more apparent. They were in sore need of repair, but no amount of restoration nor any scheme of extension could render them suitable. As day schools they were sadly out of date and had merited the disapproval of Her Majesty's Inspector on many occasions. The number of scholars in the Sunday Schools had increased so that there was no room for the admission of more. This was a most serious position for the spiritual life of the parish. Moreover, it was impossible to hold a meeting with any comfort for more than one hundred adults. The proposal put before the parishioners at the Easter Vestry of 1898 was to erect a building with a large hall capable of seating five hundred adults, surrounded by class-rooms equally convenient for day and Sunday schools, and also for use in the evenings by the many clubs and societies in course of formation. The estimated cost of the whole scheme—including a reading-room—was £6500. Writing on this subject in the Parish

Magazine of June 1898, the vicar concluded thus :

‘ With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible, and it is possible for Him to raise a friend who will come forward and greatly aid in the work. Let us pray that it may be so.’

The parishioners recognized the urgency of the matter, and such was the enthusiasm inspired by the vicar that a special Vestry Meeting was held on 13th June 1898, when it was unanimously decided to apply for a faculty giving permission to erect parochial buildings and to lay out the churchyard as a recreation ground. The vicar then appointed Thursday, 22nd September, as a day of prayer on behalf of the parish.

Throughout the whole of that Thursday the church was never empty, men and women praying continuously there for God’s blessing upon the work proposed. The Magazine for October says :

‘ Thursday, 22nd September, was observed not only in our own parish but in hundreds of homes up and down the country. It is a cheering thought that the work in this parish has a place in the hearts of so many, and that constant prayer goes up to God on our behalf. Let us continue instant in prayer.’

Sunday, 6th November, was a memorable day. At the close of Evensong the vicar told the congregation that at a sitting of the Consistory Court of London in St. Paul’s Cathedral, the required ‘ faculty ’ had been granted. He referred to the doubt so widely felt as to the possibility of raising the further sum of £6500 for the new buildings in

view of the fact that £4000 had been very recently spent on the fabric of the church. But he reminded them of his call for special prayer and of the response they had so readily made ; and then startled his hearers by the following sentence, spoken with obviously deep emotion : ‘ Before a single appeal had been sent out, nay, within forty-eight hours of the granting of the faculty, God had sent us the whole £6500.’

When this announcement was made it seemed as if the same spirit of intense gratitude was moving all hearts, and when one man stood up and began to sing the Doxology, the whole congregation rose and joined with heart and voice in that time-honoured ascription of praise. The gift was anonymous. But it was accompanied with the earnest prayer that God might use it to His glory. ‘ Such a gift given without ostentation and without the desire for human commendation God will surely bless. Let it be remembered that a special request is made that those in the parish who love the Lord may pray during the course of the building on behalf of the donor.’

This generous gift seemed to make the way clear for erection, but there were many preliminary difficulties still to be overcome. The necessity of safeguarding the legal position for the future caused much anxious consideration. Finally, however, a satisfactory deed was executed, plans were drawn, and tenders invited. But the lowest of these tenders was for £14,500, a sum far beyond the amount at the disposal of the parish. Grievous though the disappointment was, it had to be faced,

and so it was decided to curtail the scheme and invite fresh tenders. But when this decision was communicated to the generous donor of the £6500, the disappointment was turned into delight. The idea of curtailing the scheme because of its cost was promptly repudiated, and an additional £11,000 was promised to carry it out handsomely ; £8000 was to be devoted to the expense of building, £1000 to its furnishing, and £2000 to purchasing property for conversion into a lodging-house for men. On Saturday, 24th June 1899, a service was held in the churchyard, at which Mrs. Watts-Ditchfield inaugurated the building operations by cutting two sods with a spade presented by the churchwardens. This was followed by a service of thanksgiving in the church, when a brass tablet was unveiled commemorating the restoration of the church.

The interest taken by the whole parish in the development of its church life was manifest when Bishop Creighton visited Bethnal Green five weeks later on Saturday, 29th July 1899, to lay the foundation stone of the new Parochial Buildings. Flags fluttered from the small windows, bunting was suspended across the streets, and the parish presented a gala appearance to welcome its bishop. Nature seemed to rejoice in the work, for the sun shone brilliantly when the bishop laid the stone on which, above the names of the vicar, churchwardens, architect, and builders, was a commemorative inscription and the two verses from Nehemiah : ' So I prayed to the God of Heaven,' and ' The wall was built.' Under the stone was placed a bottle

in which was the latest issue of the Parish Magazine, containing an account of that special September Thursday of Intercession.

In the course of the subsequent address the bishop said :

‘ It is a source of greatest pleasure to me to mark the progress made in any parish in my diocese, and there is no parish which during the last two years has made such a great advance as that in which we are assembled. The record of the work which has gone on since Mr. Watts-Ditchfield came among you has been one of continued progress in almost every direction. I visited you first of all to rejoice with you upon taking possession of your church after its restoration, and you all know how bright and beautiful it has now become. I visited you again to see the progress made with the Men’s Services, and I heartily congratulated you upon the way in which the men of the parish were gathering round their church. And now, for the third time it is my privilege to come and this time to lay the foundation stone of these buildings which, when completed, will make this externally a model parish. There will be no church in my diocese so entirely equipped with everything necessary for parochial life. But for a parish to be really a model something more than a model vicar and model buildings is required. These are only the necessary foundations ; the parish itself must be peopled with model parishioners, bound together in the bonds of Christian love, who know what their lives mean and how they are to live them—to live them not for self but for the good of others.’

Scenes of even greater enthusiasm were witnessed when Bishop Creighton’s successor (Dr. Winnington-Ingram) visited the parish almost two years later on Saturday, 29th June 1901, to

open the new buildings. On his arrival at the entrance of the buildings the bishop was presented with a gold key by the six-year-old daughter of the vicar, and proceeded to open the door. After the bishop had passed through the building a service was held on a platform erected in the churchyard. The bishop then declared the buildings open and called upon the vicar to make a statement concerning the new buildings. The scene is best described in the words of the *News* correspondent :

‘ There could be little doubt of the place that Mr. Watts-Ditchfield occupies in the hearts of his people. Cheer after cheer went up as he began to speak. He possesses essentially the qualities for addressing men. There is a kind of magnetism in the man himself, which is probably one great secret of his success. Perhaps we should define it better as the magnetism of love. He has, too, a clear, penetrating voice, “ the voice for the open air,” as an old East End clergyman expressed it.’

It was a happy experience in the life of the vicar to see the fulfilment of so much of his earlier vision. And there was further good news to tell. ‘ Do any of you,’ he said, ‘ wonder how these buildings are to be maintained? That thought had occurred to me also ; and I may tell you now that I should have been grieved had no provision been made against their being regarded by my successor as a white elephant. The unfailing generosity of the donor of the buildings has already provided an endowment of £150 a year for their upkeep, a sum which I doubt not we shall yet see largely increased.’

The bishop, in addressing this vast gathering, said :

‘ I have known Bethnal Green for thirteen years, but never expected to see a flower-garden in this churchyard. I remember the time when you could see more dead cats in it than living people. When I saw the multitude of men who now worship in the church on a Sunday afternoon, and the large evening congregation, I thanked God from my heart for sending such a man among you as your vicar has proved himself to be. This is a great day for the people of Bethnal Green. When I came down to a confirmation service, and saw the grown-up men and women, and engaged couples too, confirmed, it gave the lie to the common thought that Bethnal Green could not be made religious. We must indeed thank God for the man, and for sending him here with such gifts—a man who has been instrumental in three and a half years in raising £29,300 for the church restoration and other church work. To mark the sense, on behalf of the Church of London, of this grand benefaction, I am going to carry out what I know to have been the intention of my predecessor, and that is to allow the patronage of the parish to be placed in the hands of five trustees, of whom the Bishop of East London will be one, and the others chosen by the vicar and the donor. In the work that has been accomplished in this parish you have an instance of the church covering all the life of the people. What has been done here should be done elsewhere too.’

The buildings thus opened were admirably fitted for their purpose. The materials used were red Staffordshire bricks with Portland stone dressings, the roofs being covered with red tiles. A cloister was formed over the portion of the churchyard above which the buildings extended.

On the ground floor five class-rooms could be thrown into the parish hall by sliding back the glazed screens which separated them from it, thus giving accommodation for one thousand people. On the first floor was the church parlour, capable of seating four hundred persons. As this room overlooked the recreation ground it was particularly light and cheerful. On the same floor were additional class-rooms which proved most useful for parish and school alike. In order to take advantage of the rise of the roof the gymnasium was placed upon the top floor and was spanned by arched principals, presenting no obstacle to the apparatus. These fittings were of the best and most recent patterns, and were adjustable, so that the gymnasium could be used by men and women, or by boys and girls. The appliances were movable, and in the event of the hall being required for any other purpose, they could be cleared away in a few minutes, and sitting room for five hundred persons could be provided. In the opposite wing to the gymnasium was a splendidly equipped cookery school. Here, in addition to three gas cookers and a large close range, there were two small open ranges, so that the pupils could practise upon the type of grate usually found in small houses.

A low-pressure hot-water system warmed the whole building. Air inlets and exhaust ventilators were provided for every department.

The transformation scene in the churchyard reminded old parishioners who had been familiar with its appearance long ago of a veritable fairy

tale. In place of a rubbish heap was a well-laid-out recreation ground, provided with two tennis courts, a bowling-green, quoit-beds, band-stand, and an asphalt cycling track. In course of time two concrete practice pitches, provided with matting and nets, took the place of the bowling-green and quoit-beds. It was an impressive scene on a summer evening, when both courts were in use, and young folk in summer attire strolled round the ground, or rested on the seats awaiting their turn to play tennis, whilst cricket practice was in full swing at the nets, giving healthy exercise to a score or more of young men. What a boon such a recreation ground proved to the young people in this overcrowded area can readily be imagined.

Such a task in itself would absorb the time, thought, and energy of most men. But not so with Watts-Ditchfield, for at the same time other schemes were being brought into active operation for the well-being of the parishioners.

During the course of parochial visiting the vicar was much impressed by the apparent neglect of ailments which are treated in the out-patients' department of our general hospitals. This was due primarily to want of knowledge ; but it was also due to lack of the necessary remedies, to the lack of convenience for nursing sickness in the wretched houses, and to the distance from this part of Bethnal Green to the nearest general hospital. To meet these urgent needs among his people the vicar resolved to have a Medical Mission and Dispensary within the parish. So the old infants' school, adjoining the church was

taken over for this purpose, and on the same afternoon that the new church buildings were actually opened, the Bishop of London gave a formal opening to the Medical Mission, although the work of the mission itself had been going on for a considerable time already. The mission consisted of a large waiting-room, with a dispensary and bandaging-room on the one side, and on the other the consulting-rooms, and later on a well-appointed surgery. The whole mission was under the management of the late Dr. Harford of Livingstone College, assisted by specialists for eye and skin diseases. A qualified nurse became a necessity, and later on Nurse Bowman was attached to the mission in this capacity. She proved herself to be a 'friend in need' to untold numbers of the poorer people, and her kindly sympathy and patience were an ever constant witness of what the Christian life is meant to be. Thousands of men and women in need and sickness availed themselves of these new privileges, which meant more than merely medical advice and direction. Cases were constantly being treated by the nurse in the home as well as in the mission, and much valuable instruction in matters hygienic was given to those in greatest need. It was a sight at once pathetic and inspiring to see at ten o'clock on the three mornings in each week that the Medical Mission was open, the waiting-room full of ill-clad, suffering humanity—men, women, and children of all ages—and to realize that without such an effort to follow the will and way of the Master this part of His flock would have gone through life un-

shepherded and unloved. A short preliminary service of cheer and encouragement was always held in the waiting-room.

Above the Medical Mission, and opened on the same afternoon, was the Men's Club, part of which was formerly the girls' school. The club was organized by members of the Men's Service for purposes of recreation, and not as a means of attracting the outsider to attend the service. For some time the club had occupied a small house in St. James's Road. It was with great rejoicing that the members took possession of their new quarters. A large room in which were three full-sized billiard-tables, with all the necessary furniture, and a bar at which were sold tea, coffee, aerated waters, biscuits, buns, cigarettes, etc., proved the most attractive feature of the club. The reading-room was new, and commanded a fine view of the recreation ground. It was well provided with papers and magazines, and contained a full set of the volumes of *Punch*.

Nor did this complete the full scheme of material building that the vicar had in his mind. Although Bethnal Green recognized in its vicar one who was giving of his best for them, although he was a familiar figure in their streets, and a welcome visitor in their homes, yet there was the natural shrinking from attending church in ragged clothes. By those who know Bethnal Green this is readily understood. It was yet another problem to be solved. The church had established friendly relationship with the people, but still there were numbers who would not come to church. 'Well,'

was the answer of the vicar, 'if the people will not come to the church, the church must go to the people.' It was the adaptation of lessons learned in the country to the needs of city life. Distance was the obstacle in the country, and a shame—not wholly discreditable—in the city. So a small mission-room was opened at 78 Cranbrook Road in 1899, and there the Sunday School and Cottage Services for the people of the district were held. This was only a temporary measure to meet the immediate need. The work rapidly outgrew the accommodation, and it was essential that larger premises should be secured.

The vicar ascertained that a disused chapel in Sidney Street was on the market, and this was purchased for a sum of £1800. After the necessary repairs had been effected and alterations made, the Sidney Street Mission was opened on Saturday, 7th December 1901, by the Countess of Ancaster. The building contained two halls, one in the basement for two hundred people, and the other above it for about three hundred. The upper hall had a large gallery in addition to the floor space. There was also a small room, but large enough to be used as a vestry or for committee meetings.

For the people in Ames Street similar accommodation was provided by securing the lease of a shop and making the necessary alterations.

The purchase of the Sidney Street Mission did not complete the parochial machinery in accordance with the ideals of the vicar. Much consideration had been given to the problem of how to obtain cheap but clean lodging for single men

who were in casual employment. The 'doss-house' had an unsavoury reputation, and rightly so. Three houses were purchased in Ames Street, and these were converted into the 'Working Men's Hotel,' which was opened by Lady Wimborne on 14th December 1901.

The Bible Class for lads and young men, which at first had found ample accommodation in one of the smaller rooms of the new buildings, developed so rapidly under the leadership of the Rev. George Twentymen, that the membership grew to two hundred and thirty, and obviously demanded a separate home. So it was decided to complete the set of buildings in which the Men's Club and the Medical Mission were housed, and to give the Bible Class the accommodation their numbers required. But even now that the great plan of erecting buildings adequate for the needs of the parish was at last carried to a visible and completed result other demands presented themselves to the mind of the vicar. University men from time to time came to him to offer themselves for social work in order to learn at first hand the nature of the problems to be confronted in the East End. Graduates preparing for Ordination were anxious to spend their vacations in a parish where the forces of Christianity were so organized that they obviously exercised a real influence on the life of the masses and secured results that were beneficial alike to the individual and to the community. Clergymen in country parishes and many from overseas were eager to get a first-hand acquaintance with the methods employed so effec-

tively in the parish of St. James-the-Less. Lack of suitable accommodation for these men during their sojourn prohibited the vicar from using the opportunity for wider service thus presented to him. It became clear that a 'Settlement House' was essential if the parish were to be used of God in the way indicated. So an architect was appointed, and plans were drawn up for a Settlement House, and on 19th March 1904 the Lord Mayor of London laid the foundation stone, and on 10th December of the same year Lady Wimborne opened the building known as Ridley House. The name was chosen owing to the association of the place with Bishop Ridley. For the new Settlement House stands upon the site of the ancient residence of the Bishops of London up to the time of the Reformation, the last occupant being Bishop Bonner. It is interesting to think that a monument commemorative of the martyred bishop has been raised upon the very spot where the man lived who sentenced him to his death. Ridley House adjoins the church and faces St. James's Road. On the ground floor is the Young Men's Guild, in which there are two full-sized billiard tables, a hall with wood-blocked floor, used as a badminton court, boxing ring and other similar purposes. Collapsible seats supply the necessary accommodation for the Bible Class on Sundays and for entertainments and meetings during the week. A bar is provided similar to that in use in the Men's Club. A reading-room and bathroom are also available for members. At the rear of the guild, on the same floor, are the Medical Mission

and Dispensary, the usefulness of which was greatly enhanced by the erection of a surgery, the generous gift of Dr. Harford.

On the first floor were rooms for two clergy, with accommodation for eight university men, whilst in the rear of these rooms was the Men's Club.

On the second floor was a well-appointed dining-room, with cubicles to be used as bedrooms. The kitchen and scullery were also situated on this floor.

The aim of the vicar in establishing a Settlement House in the parish was threefold.

- I. That university men might gain practical experience in social work on lines which ensure that spiritual work is the basis, and that the centre is the Church. Candidates for Ordination were received for long or short periods.
- II. That business men, medical students, civil servants, and others could have the opportunity of participating in the work on Sundays and on week-day evenings.
- III. That clergy and others from the country or from abroad who wished to know something of the East End and its problems, and how the Church is endeavouring to solve them, might be received for a night, a week-end, or for a longer period.

There are many in Orders to-day who thank God for inspiring Watts-Ditchfield with the vision to build Ridley House, and who would not otherwise have had the privilege of serving God as

ministers in His Church. The building cost £5000, towards which another anonymous donor gave £3000 in memory of her father.

It seems almost incredible that such an enormous task in the way of building should have been accomplished within eight years. A parish which had been inadequately fitted to serve the needs of the people had become in that short period the most efficient in the East End of London, from the point of view of buildings and accessories, and a sum of no less than £40,000 had been raised and expended upon it.

CHAPTER V

PAROCHIAL LIFE

THE erection of the big and costly buildings and the formation and organization of the various clubs and societies which were housed within them occupied much time, but they were regarded as only a means to an end and not the end itself. The spiritual was always first in the life and service of Watts-Ditchfield. 'The winning of souls for Christ' was the great aim of his life, and upon this endeavour time, thought, and energy were concentrated. There was no place in his life for failure. 'The Good Shepherd went after the sheep that was lost *until He found it*' was a favourite saying, and one which dominated his whole ministry. There must be no thought of the cost to the soul-winner; there must be no fear as to the result; in prayerful confidence the soul must be wooed until it is won for Christ. The more uncongenial the soil, the greater the service; the more impossible the task, the stronger the faith; the more depressing the outlook, the brighter shone the pure light of hope and love. Such an outlook was an inspiration and incentive to all who were privileged to work with him. No effort was to be spared, no method left untried. The church was the centre of spiritual life and

effort ; but from it radiated a warmth that was to quicken the spiritual life of every corner of the parish.

The Men's Service was rendered bright and attractive by the introduction of an orchestra, but whilst every effort needed to retain the hundreds who were members of the Church was made the thousands who were out of touch with Christ had to be sought in loving confidence and with patient endurance. Frequently the warning was given to co-workers, 'Do not concentrate the whole of your attention on those within. Give more time, thought, and prayer to those without.'

A brass band was formed in connection with the Men's Service, and an able instructor secured to train those who were willing to play an instrument. During the period of instruction preparations were made for the band's sphere of usefulness. Each public-house was visited by the vicar, and the co-operation of the proprietor in inviting men to the church sought for and obtained. Although a keen temperance advocate, Watts-Ditchfield established friendly relations between the publicans and the church. In consequence of this the representatives of St. James-the-Less always received a friendly welcome at the public-houses.

On Sunday afternoon, shortly after two o'clock, the band assembled, and the vicar, or one of his colleagues, as the staff increased, prayed for God's blessing, and then led the band, accompanied by a number of the Men's Service committee, on its mission. A kindly smile, a cheery greeting, and a card of invitation were given to the men in the

street or at their doors. A halt was made outside the public-houses, a short address was given, and cards of invitation were offered to each man within. At the corner of the more important thoroughfares the same plan was adopted. Thus by visiting certain districts each Sunday, the whole parish was covered in a month.

Occasionally a midnight service was held in the hall on a Saturday evening. The presence of the Church Army, with Prebendary Carlile at their head, was now and again of great assistance. A large body of men was enrolled to help. The band led the way, each public-house was visited, and willing workers accompanied and, in some cases, assisted the men to the hall. The large hall, full of men more or less under the influence of drink, was a sad but impressive sight. Old favourite hymns were sung, prayers offered, and straight talks given. Names and addresses were obtained whenever possible, and then each man was visited during the course of the ensuing week by the vicar or one of his colleagues. The vicar rarely used this abnormal means of reaching men, although in many cases good results were obtained and men were won from a life of intemperance to a life of sobriety.

The Men's Service was looked upon as the normal means by which men were led to Christ. It was the privilege of one of the assistant curates to visit a child during severe illness. The home was well ordered and spotlessly clean. A happy family spirit seemed to promote complete harmony between husband and wife and parents and children.

As the visitor bade farewell to the father after tea one afternoon, he commented on the fact. The man replied : ‘ I should like to tell you my story, for you will understand better than what I owe to the vicar. When the vicar came to St. James-the-Less I was a hopeless drunkard. My wife and children lived in want. Most of the furniture had been sold and we lived in one room. My wife dreaded my return in the evening. I ill-treated her and even struck her, but she stuck to me. She was a brick ; I was a brute. I shudder to think of it now. My children were afraid of me, and when I came in they went out or to bed. The vicar brought me to Christ through the Men’s Service, and with the help of God I and my home are what you see to-day. Do you wonder that we love him ? ’

The vicar had made several attempts to win a man who was a slave to drink, but each attempt had been unsuccessful. The man had not the will-power begotten of faith to resist the craving. ‘ Will you put yourself entirely in my hands ? ’ asked the vicar. ‘ I will do anything to conquer this curse,’ was the reply. The vicar took the man to the vicarage and kept him there for a week. He was never left. Either the vicar or his colleague was always with him, and the demon was driven out. The result of this individual effort, with its heavy expenditure of time and nervous energy, is seen to-day in a happy home life.

The vicar was a convinced believer in the efficacy of well-organized open-air work in such a parish. On Sunday morning Green Street is a

busy marketing thoroughfare, the stalls in the street doing splendid business. At the corner of Green Street and Bonner Street an open-air service was held. To one unaccustomed to such meetings it seemed incongruous. The costers were shouting their wares in their own inimitable manner, the crowds passed on their way, and there was the usual vehicular traffic ; but above the din could be heard the singing of a well-known hymn and then the voice of the preacher, in a short address, proclaimed the Christian message.

On a Sunday evening in the summer, when people flocked in hundreds from Victoria Park at closing time, a large open-air service was held outside the park gates at the top of St. James's Road. A considerable number of the congregation of St. James-the-Less would form the nucleus, and hundreds would stand and listen as they were on their homeward way. Hymn-books were provided so that all could join in the service. A badly-organized open air service, with a weak speaker, would have proved disastrous. The vicar emphasized the principle on many occasions that only the best should be given in the open air. In *The Church in Action* he wrote : ' One condition must be laid down concerning all work in the open air. It must be worthy of the Church which it represents, and must be of the very best possible character. How much harm has been done to the Church of Christ by the number of feeble and inefficient services in the open air will never be known.' Many and many were the recruits obtained by means of these services for Bible Classes,

Men's Service, Evensong, and eventually for Confirmation.

In his ardent desire to win souls Watts-Ditchfield arranged for missions to be held at rare intervals in St. James-the-Less and also in the Sidney Street Mission. Long and careful preparation was made for every effort of this kind. When the time came to gather in the outsider the same unconventional methods were employed as had been found so successful in the other branches of the work. On one occasion some five hundred members of the congregation, each carrying a Japanese lantern, formed a procession, and singing hymns, traversed the greater part of the parish. On another occasion a pantechicon was hired, a sheet was placed at the back of the van, and pictures were thrown on it from a lantern within. The poorest streets and alleys were visited, and a short informal service was held. The inhabitants crowded to their windows and doors, whilst many came into the street and joined in the service.

Practical experience had taught Watts-Ditchfield the value of personal influence. To win souls for Christ it was clear to him that there must always be a means of sympathetic approach between clergy and people. By frequent intercourse the clergy were the better able to understand the lives of the people, and to fulfil their special mission. He was convinced that the personal influence could not be secured save by constant and systematic visiting. This proved a heavy burden on the already overtaxed vicar. As the staff of clergy grew in numbers, so the

parish was divided into districts ; and for each of these districts one of the clergy, with a lady helper to assist him, was made responsible. The visiting books contained the lists of streets, the names of the families in each house, and notes in regard to the children and the attitude of each member in regard to religion. A report of the visiting was made each week to the vicar. Great care was exercised in regard to the visitation of the sick, and particularly of those in the hospitals and infirmaries.

The building up of this thorough system took many years to accomplish, and was beset with many difficulties. In the beginning the visits of the clergy were far from welcome, but as the parishioners came to know their vicar better the task became easier. During the first winter there were hostile demonstrations when the vicar and his wife visited certain parts of the parish, and only the courageous good humour of the vicar prevented serious consequences. On several occasions in the early days the vicar had the door shut in his face, but such an occurrence in later years would have been almost inconceivable. A sensitiveness for the feelings of others was a contributory factor to the awakening and fostering of the parochial spirit. In Bethnal Green the Englishman's house is his castle just as much as in the country districts, and entrance to a home was a privilege not to be abused. The same courtesy was shown to the poorest person in the parish as would have been shown to the wealthiest or highest in the land. There were constant requests from the curious

to see the interior of the houses in 'the slums,' but to have yielded to them would have been to destroy the delicacy of the friendship that was imperceptibly growing up between clergy and people. Visiting was by no means easy nor attractive. The splendid example set by the vicar was an incentive to go and do likewise. In the event of the illness of the woman in the home, it was not unusual to find the lady worker of the district sweeping and tidying the house, putting the children to bed, sometimes even bathing the baby, and then preparing the husband's evening meal. But she took care to be out of the house before his return.

At times the visiting of the sick was peculiarly trying. A call came to visit a dying man in one of the tenement buildings. Ascending three flights of stairs the vicar entered a room about 12 feet by 10 feet. In the far corner, on a small camp bed, lay the man in the last stages of consumption. Adjoining this was a ramshackle bed occupied by a married couple. Three children slept in the other corner at the same end of the room. In the centre was a rough table at which match-boxes were made. A stove and cooking utensils completed the furnishing of the room. Thus kitchen, dining-room, workroom, and bedroom for three adults and three children were found in the limited space of this small room. Such was the insanitary nature of these dwellings.

On a Saturday afternoon a small boy arrived at the vicarage, and in great distress cried, 'Father's drunk again and is going to kill mother with a

chopper.' The vicar immediately set out to bring peace to this disturbed family. When there was trouble of this nature it was to the vicarage that people seemed to turn instinctively. Such duties were undertaken at some personal risk.

On another Saturday evening, at half-past eleven, a young man arrived, excited and half drunk. He was invited to sit down, whereupon, after the manner of men in such a state, he burst into tears. At last the following story was told : ' I went down to the . . . you know the pub at the corner of . . . and . . . there I had—well, one too many. I 'm a dreadful fool to do it. My missus is one of the best, and I 've got two lovely kids. Her father and mother live with us. Well, I got home, and what happened to me I don't know. I saw red because my supper wasn't on the table, and I threw the saucepan across the room and kicked up a row. The children woke and rushed in screaming. Her father and mother came in, and I went mad. I picked up a knife and said I 'd do them all in, and so I should, I think, if I had not stumbled against a chair and fallen. They all rushed out into the street. The fall cooled me off a bit, and I went down to find them. They came back with a sergeant and an ordinary policeman, so I bolted before they saw me. My God, what can I do ? I 've got a good job, but if the Company hear of it, they 'll sack me. What can I do ? What can I do ? '

' Well, come along with me.' It was nearly twenty minutes' walk outside the parish and in one of the worst of the slums, but this did not

trouble the winner of souls. The police were in charge, but there was no difficulty with them.

Then came a long and tedious task, but after a time the family knelt in prayer, the man was undressed and put to bed, and St. James-the-Less was eventually reached shortly after 2 A.M. on the Sunday morning. That day the man came to church and was linked up with the Men's Club.

The club life of the parish was a great factor in holding those won for Christ and keeping them from exposure to temptation during the leisure hours when Satan seems to be most aggressive. In a parish such as St. James-the-Less it was necessary to provide places of recreation and amusement where the evenings could be spent with enjoyment and profit, as otherwise there were only the public-houses and street corners, for the overcrowded dwellings were wholly devoid of the necessary space. The privileges of membership were confined to those who were associated with the church, and were not intended as a bait to induce people to attend church. The Men's Club was linked up with the Men's Service, and here could be seen, evening by evening, the men of the parish engaged in playing billiards, bagatelle, draughts, chess, cards, etc. This was the one club in which certain games of cards were allowed, but gambling in any form was strictly prohibited. The organization was carried on by a committee who were responsible for the conduct of the club. One of the great evenings of the year was that on which the vicar challenged the winner of the billiard tournament. This event evoked

much enthusiasm and created some amusement. Football, cricket, and tennis were also part of the club programme.

The Young Men's Guild was open to all members of the Bible Class, and to young men engaged in church work. The more robust games appealed strongly to the guild members, and in one year there were five football teams, two cricket teams, a swimming club, a cycling club, and harriers. Many trophies were won as the result of prowess on the field of sport. From the guild came a steady supply of Sunday School teachers, workers for the open air and missions, as a result of which some of its members are in Holy Orders to-day. On a Sunday evening it was an inspiring sight to see the whole of the south gallery of the church filled with young men, for this portion of the church was reserved for members of the guild, a privilege which was appreciated by them.

One of the assistant curates, the Rev. E. A. Dunn, was given charge of the Sidney Street Mission, and in two years he had gathered together a Bible Class whose average attendance exceeded one hundred. Many of these young men had been in prison, but their behaviour was orderly and reverent. Numbers of them had a hard battle to fight when they determined to turn over a new leaf. One young fellow who was confirmed, was much ridiculed on the following day in the workshop where he was employed. Some of his fellow-workers made a wooden cross; one of their number put on an old shirt over his clothes

in imitation of a surplice, and as the converted young man sat eating his dinner in the works, the others formed a procession with the cross at their head, and walking round and round him sang blasphemous songs. The young man, however, was true to his colours, with the result that one of his assailants yielded to Christ; his mother and sisters were converted and became regular attendants of the services, whilst the father, who was a drunkard of long standing, became a moderate drinker so that he might not bring shame on his lad, of whom he was justly proud.

Here, again, athletics in the form of football and cricket occupied a prominent place in the life of the club associated with the Bible Class.

Nor was the need for healthy recreation and amusement among the young women and girls ignored. The Young Women's Guild was brought into being for the members of the Bible Class, whilst similar clubs performed the same useful purpose for the girls' Bible Classes held in connexion with the church and the missions. These clubs had classes in singing, elocution, sewing, first-aid, etc., so that they were not merely places of amusement, but of instruction too.

The Children's Guild was a popular resort on Monday evenings. This was open to members of the Sunday School, the Children's Church, which was held each Sunday morning at 10.30 in the large hall, and the Children's Service, which also took place in the large hall, on Sunday evening at 6.30. The Church Lads' Brigade had its place in the life of the parish, and in course of time a

troop of Boy Scouts and a company of Girl Guides were associated with the church and the Sidney Street and Ames Street Missions. These organizations helped to strengthen both the character and the physique of their members. The Scouts looked forward to their annual camp, a favourite place for which was on the bank of the Thames at Dorney, near Windsor.

The annual parochial outing was a delightful event to which all looked forward with much pleasure. It was imposing to see thirty or more brakes lined up in St. James's Road and Sewardstone Road, and it was a joy to witness the excitement with which the long procession began its journey to Epping Forest, where the day was spent in games and sports of various descriptions. The happy party was welcomed home with demonstrations of rejoicing, the houses being festooned with flags and lanterns.

The same keen interest was taken by the vicar in the hobbies of the men, as was shown at St. Peter's. These were fostered and encouraged by annual shows. The church grounds presented a pleasing appearance on the occasion of the Flower Show, and the display of flowers grown in the parish was a source of wonder and astonishment to those who only knew Bethnal Green by its general appearance. The grounds were crowded, and the happy throng, young and old alike, entered with zest into the spirit of the day. The vicar was the life and soul of the gathering. A confetti battle, or some such similar attraction, brought an enjoyable day to its close. The Poultry Show

was a revelation of what could be done in an environment that would normally be regarded as unproductive. Many a man was led in this way to take up a hobby and to spend his time in a profitable and enjoyable manner. On occasions of national importance firework displays were given in the grounds, and thus the parishioners were enabled to take some share in the national rejoicing, from which they would otherwise have been debarred.

The cumulative effect of these means of winning and retaining old and young was to awaken a family feeling in the parish and to develop a spiritual atmosphere. A critic of Watts-Ditchfield's methods, writing in the April 1904 number of the *Treasury*, says :

' One very good feature of his work, and one which recalls the condition of things as they must have been in the very early days of Christianity, is the manner in which he and his people are bound together in a real bond of brotherhood. They meet daily, they are constantly engaged in good works, clerical and lay members of the parish alike. One is conscious as soon as one enters that ghastly neighbourhood that there is a community of interest, a centre of brotherhood, a rallying-place for the depressed and the heavy-laden. The church stands there as a beacon upon a lonely hill, as a lighthouse flashing its friendly rays upon a storm-tossed sea, as a Calvary beneath which all may find healing, rest, and shelter. However long and weary the day, there is always something to look forward to in the evening ; however spiteful and cruel the factory companions, there are always friendship and kindly welcome awaiting one in the church, or the school, or the club-room at night.'

It is difficult to gauge spiritual progress in a parish, and although the number of communicants and Confirmation candidates does not constitute a real test, it is the nearest approach to such that can be found. In 1897 the number of communicants on Easter Day was 26 ; the number in 1898, the first Easter spent by Watts-Ditchfield in the parish, was 185, which number grew steadily till it reached the maximum of 915 in 1914. In 1898, 53 candidates were presented for Confirmation, which number increased till, in 1914, there were 120 candidates. In seventeen years 1509 candidates were presented for Confirmation, of whom 755 were above twenty years of age.

The number of children in the Sunday Schools bore testimony to the fact that the church had a real hold on the people of the parish. In the Sunday School of St. James-the-Less there were 1480 scholars on the roll, with an average attendance of 1080, and a teaching staff of 107. But if we include the mission Sunday Schools, there were no less than 2000 scholars enrolled, with 150 teachers.

Although Watts-Ditchfield was so keen on evangelization the teaching side of the Church's ministry occupied its rightful place in the parochial life. Bible Study Classes were held, which were attended by hundreds of the parishioners, and subjects of a complex and abstract nature were dealt with and explained. Courses of instruction on the Prayer Book and its teaching, and on Church History and its significance, proved attractive and edifying. The parishioners had

the privilege of hearing all the best preachers of the day, many of whom were surprised at the intelligent attention with which their sermons were listened to and appreciated. In fact, it would have been difficult to find a more intelligent and appreciative congregation than that of St. James-the-Less.

If Christianity is to have its full effect on life and character, then love towards God must be expressed in service of one's fellow-men. The motto 'Saved to Serve,' and the Archbishop of York's expression, 'Confirmation is the layman's Ordination for service,' adequately expressed the vicar's teaching, and were frequently used to promote this spirit in the congregation. There was ample opportunity for service within the parish, but the parish was only part of the diocese, and the diocese part of the world for which our Lord gave His life. Therefore service outside the borders of the parish was essential if life were to be lived in accordance with the teaching of Christ. The congregation of St. James-the-Less was led to take an active interest in the greater life of the church by the sermons preached and the intercessions offered. As a result of this contributions were given to many extra-parochial objects, including the East London Church Fund, the Bishop of London's Fund, the Church Pastoral Aid Society, the British and Foreign Bible Society, Dr. Barnardo's Homes, the Children's Homes, the Mission to the Jews, and the hospitals.

The vicar taught that a live Church is a missionary Church. If the home work is to be main-

tained there must be a vital interest in the mission field. ' Missionary enterprise is not to be undertaken by the Church as an "extra." As the Lambeth Encyclical of 1897 so well said, it is " the primary work of the Church, the work for which the Church was commissioned by our Lord." ' ¹ For many years St. James-the-Less has supported its own missionary, and was fortunate in securing as its representative the Rev. George Wright, who is now Bishop of Sierra Leone. The task of wholly supporting a man at the front seems stupendous, but the parish was equal to the task, and year by year £200 was subscribed for this purpose. The amount was made up almost entirely of coppers. It was an encouragement to find a C.M.S. box in the poorest homes in the parish. This link between the Church in the homeland and in the Mission overseas created a vital interest, and the visit of their own missionary when on furlough was a stimulus to missionary enthusiasm and enterprise.

¹ *Here and Hereafter*, p. 142.

CHAPTER VI

EXTRA-PAROCHIAL ACTIVITIES

‘COME and lend a hand.’ The response was instantaneous. Many men went to the room from which proceeded the cheery voice of the vicar, and found him already at work moving chairs from one room to another. It was ever thus with Watts-Ditchfield. ‘Come and serve,’ not ‘Go and serve,’ was his bidding. He never expected from others what he himself was not prepared to give. And what a lead he gave in the matter of service! It is extremely difficult to grasp the magnitude of the man’s public service, for to each branch was given such concentrated attention and whole-hearted interest that many were led to believe that it was the only branch of public service in which Watts-Ditchfield was personally interested.

St. James-the-Less was a ‘poor man’s parish,’ and consequently the composition and administration of the Poor Laws were matters of vital importance to the parishioners. Watts-Ditchfield perceived the need for reform of the Poor Laws in both respects, and because of their influence within the borders of his parish he allowed himself to be nominated as a candidate for the Board of Guardians at the election in April 1899. His opponent was a prominent publican in Bethnal

Green. Owing to its unique appeal his election address attracted much attention both within and without the electorate. The following are extracts therefrom :

‘ It is owing to Christianity that the Poor Laws are in existence, and therefore their administration should be in the spirit of the Founder of Relief, Christ. This is, however, not always the case. In dealing with the question I would ask : “ What would probably be the policy of the Master on this question, viewed from the standpoint of to-day ? ” Although difficult to answer, there are certain general principles which we may safely gather from the Gospels.

‘ (1) In a city like London . . . it may safely be asserted that He would support the policy that “ the strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak.”

‘ (2) It is scarcely to be imagined that He would insist that every old man or old woman should be compelled to enter the “ House,” no matter how respectable their lives had been, when half a crown or three shillings and sixpence a week would enable them still to live with their friends. Nor do the Gospels suggest that He would separate the aged couple after thirty or forty years of married life, and compel them to wear a degrading and distinctive dress, simply because they are poor. . . If elected I shall strive to serve you as ratepayers, and those of whom you make me Guardian, by keeping as my motto during my term of office : “ Inasmuch as ye do it unto one of the least of these, ye do it unto Me.” ’

So great was the interest evoked in the contest that it resulted in the heaviest poll and in the largest vote ever recorded for one candidate in the experience of Bethnal Green. It also gave to Watts-Ditchfield the biggest majority ever secured

in the borough. He remained a member of the Board till the election following his consecration as bishop. Taking a lively interest in the work, he was the means of much useful reform, particularly in regard to the local administration of the Act. During his term of office he served as chairman of all the leading committees and, having refused the appointment in 1909, became chairman of the Board in 1910.

But he saw clearly that relief, no matter how judiciously and sympathetically given, was a palliative and not the remedy. Was it possible for men to live and to develop physically, morally, and spiritually under such conditions as existed within the parish? Could he remain indifferent to such an environment and by his silence acquiesce in conditions which were a standing disgrace to a civilized community? As he thought on these things, he heard the voice of reproach, 'The hungry sheep look up and are not fed.' As he passed along the streets, or visited the homes of his people, he remembered how Christ, when He saw the multitudes neglected and uncared for, was moved with compassion. Was not he their shepherd? How his heart ached with compassion for these neglected sheep whose bodies were stunted and dwarfed by their unhealthy environment, whose minds were wholly occupied in the frantic endeavour to keep 'the wolf from the door,' whose every-day life was a barrier to their spiritual development, and to whom it seemed incredible that a God of Love could look down and tolerate such conditions! Watts-

Ditchfield's voice was soon heard proclaiming these things, and bidding men of character rise in protest and for ever cast them out of the life of the nation. But it seemed as if the voice cried in the wilderness, and so other means must be sought to awaken the conscience of the nation to a sense of its responsibility for the existence and continuance of so great a reproach in their midst. He conceived the idea of holding a small exhibition of 'home' industries in order to show what work was done in this way, and to make public the wages paid for such work.

Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales graciously visited the parish on 23rd April 1902, and after planting a tree in the church grounds and being present at other functions in the hall, inspected with keen interest the various articles in the exhibition. The success of this small effort encouraged Watts-Ditchfield to proceed with a wider scheme. An Industrial Exhibition was planned on a much larger scale, in order to show what Bethnal Green meant to the industrial world, and also to demonstrate the miserable pittance paid to the 'home' worker. After months of careful thought and painstaking effort, the exhibition was held in the large hall of the St. James-the-Less Buildings early in May 1904. The interest awakened by this effort is seen in the fact that much space was given in all the papers, including the *Times*, the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Morning Post*, the *Morning Leader*, the *Daily Mail*, the *Daily Express*, etc., to a descriptive account of the exhibition. A page of sketches of work done,

with wages paid, entitled 'A Peep behind the East End scenes,' with the following article, appeared in the *Daily Graphic* of 9th May 1904 :

'The vicar of St. James-the-Less has organized in his district, the heart of Bethnal Green, an exhibition which is unique, and the inspection of which arouses mingled feelings of painful surprise and unexpected pleasure. Surprise and pleasure because it shows specimens of as fine marquetry and other furniture, silk-weaving, and other industries, as can be seen anywhere ; pain because at every turn one is confronted with articles, well and faithfully made, the making of which has been carried out by poor people for a remuneration which is a scandal to humanity. What is to be thought of the following prices paid to these unfortunate people : for making match-boxes, 2¼d. a gross ; for a man's shirt, complete with buttons, 1¾d. ; paper bags, 6d. a thousand ; a man's Norfolk jacket, complete, 6d. ? All this, and much more like it, and at even worse wage, is done in the living-rooms of the people of the East End.

'The exhibition gives a complete idea of the industrial capacity of the borough of Bethnal Green ; bicycles, pianos, furniture, brushes, picture frames, are shown on the ground floor, and the East End "home work" on the floor above.'

There were certain aspects of the industrial life of Bethnal Green that it was impossible to exhibit. Within the parish there lived a colony of silk-weavers, some of whom were descendants of the Huguenots. These weavers were skilled in the use of the hand-loom. The quality of the work produced was demonstrated by the fact that the coronation robe of King Edward VII. was woven here.

Moreover, to estimate accurately the evils of the sweated industries, it was essential that the conditions under which these unfortunate people worked should be seen.

The *Daily Chronicle* of 9th May 1904 published an interesting article, from which the following extract has been taken :

‘ In the dark, crowded rooms of small highly-rented houses men and women slave and work from daylight till dark to make the meanest pittance. Sixteen hours’ work a day, keeping hard at it, often only brings in a paltry 8s. a week to the worker, who, in many cases, has to support a large family and pay a rent of 2s. 6d. a week for a room.

‘ Through the kindness of one of the lady workers in the parish of St. James-the-Less, I was,’ writes a *Daily Chronicle* representative, ‘ taken to many of the houses for these toilers, and allowed to see them at their work.

‘ I was escorted to the home of an artificial flower-maker. She was seventy-seven, a bright old dame, in spite of her years and hard work. Her room was reached after a hazardous climb up a rickety flight of narrow stairs that creaked and groaned under my weight.

‘ Here the old woman slept, cooked her meals, and lived. From the window, which was so close to the opposite side of the room that only a small table and about two feet of standing room separated it from the fireplace, a dreary view of roofs and smoking chimneys only could be seen.

‘ On the little table at the foot of the bed a bunch of dead flowers, primroses and tulips, rested in a broken jar filled with yellow water. Weeks ago they had gladdened the old dame’s heart, and now she was reluctant to part with them. On a box in the far corner were bundles of artificial flowers, strewn on the table were half-finished marguerites. “ I get 2s. a gross for making these, sir,” said

the old lady, "but I can't do as well at it as I used to. Years ago I could finish a gross a day, but now it takes me all my time to do half—that 's if I keep at it all day.

"It 's nice work, and I always liked flowers. I 'm used to them, for I was apprenticed to the trade when a girl."

'The worst-paid workers in this part, I found, were the box-makers—shoe-boxes and match-boxes. At the latter occupation the women looked pinched and tired; continual stooping had curved their backs, and the necessity for sitting in a small room with a big fire, to dry the paste on the boxes, seemed to have drawn all the vitality out of them.

'Crowded up in the smallest spaces these women were toiling. In the corner of their rooms ill-dressed and poorly-fed children scrambled about. The remains of a half-finished breakfast of bread and gravy stood in one room on a paste-covered table, where piles of half-finished boxes were heaped.

'Twopence-farthing a gross, finding their own paste, and fetching and delivering the boxes from the shops, is the payment and conditions under which these workers slave. Boot-box makers receive 1s. 3d. per half-gross, finding their own paste.'

The *Daily News* was so impressed that it was decided to hold a similar exhibition in the Queen's Hall, London, in May 1906. A *Daily News* representative interviewed Watts-Ditchfield in March 1906 in regard to the two exhibitions held by him in the East End.

'What was the result?' asked the representative.

'The exhibition brought down people from all parts. The ordinary West-End shoppers, particularly ladies, were shocked to find for the first time what miserable wages were paid for making

articles for which they were in the habit of paying fancy prices in the shops. The result was that many of them ordered goods direct from the workers' own homes, and paid them proper prices.'

'Did the sweating firms, or even ordinary trading houses, cry out against your exhibition?'

'I received no protests,' said Mr. Watts-Ditchfield. 'What was encouraging was the receipt of letters from fair houses asking for further particulars. One large city firm, for instance, that places thousands of ladies' blouses on the market every year, wrote to question whether any article at all resembling a blouse could be made for $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. I was able to send the firm a blouse, usually sold at 7s. 6d., which had been made for $2\frac{1}{2}$ d., containing no fewer than seventy tucks. The firm, which made their own blouses under fair conditions, were amazed, and they admitted to me that they were now able for the first time to understand how certain other firms undersold them.'

'In the interests, then, of fair houses, the evils of sweating should be exposed?'

'Precisely. The employers who have their own healthy workrooms, and pay proper wages, are sorely handicapped by their sweating competitors. These latter pay nothing for the building and upkeep of a workroom. They pay nothing for fire or light, or rent. They have their work done in the homes of poor people who are not restricted as to hours by the Factory Act. In the end they pay for the work at a price that barely

keeps body and soul together. Can you wonder that the fair employer is undersold ? ’

‘ You agree that home-work is the cause of sweating ? ’

‘ Yes. The employer bears no responsibility when his work is done by home-workers. On the other hand, the home-workers themselves have no power of combination. They are at the mercy of unscrupulous employers and middlemen who drive down prices to starvation level.’

‘ Do you think the West End really cares whether it buys sweated goods or not ? ’

‘ Judging by the interest shown in the Bethnal Green exhibitions, the West End will take up the matter eagerly. Large sections of its wealthy population do care. The fact that the *Daily News* exhibition is to be held in the West End will, I think, make for its success. There is a far deeper interest in this problem than appears on the surface. The public errs in its shopping chiefly in ignorance. If people knew that the real price of certain articles was not the money paid for them, but the flesh and blood of human beings, they would willingly pay an extra trifle for something produced under better conditions. The public wants educating to the evils of sweating. A well-organized exhibition is the best way to do that.’

The following descriptive account, which appeared in the *Daily News* of 7th May 1906, shows Watts-Ditchfield’s attitude towards this evil :

‘ Another interested crowd visited the *Daily News* Sweated Industries Exhibition at Queen’s Hall, London, on Saturday. The afternoon lecture was delivered by the

Rev. J. E. Watts-Ditchfield, vicar of St. James-the-Less, Bethnal Green. In introducing the lecturer, the Chairman (Mr. A. G. Gardiner) said Mr. Watts-Ditchfield could claim to have organized the first sweated industries exhibition in London.' . . . 'The present one had been opened in the West End in order that those who knew little or nothing of the conditions of home-work might have an opportunity of learning how many of their poorer neighbours lived.'

'Taking as his subject "The Housing Problem and Sweating," Mr. Watts-Ditchfield said that poor wages plus high rents not only led to overcrowding, but to sweating. It was still correct in the main that some 46 per cent. of the poor paid from one-quarter to one-half of their total earnings in rent. From official figures obtained that day, he found that Bethnal Green contained 5378 one-room tenements, 7464 two-room tenements, 6746 three-room tenements. "Consider now what lies behind these figures," said Mr. Watts-Ditchfield. "These 5378 one-room homes contained some 19,000 people. That means that we have families of twelve, ten, and nine people living in single rooms. What does this lead to? Hardly a night passes without one of these single rooms having a dead body sharing the limited space with the rest of the family. This aspect of the problem is often forgotten. In my own parish I visited a house where I saw the dead body of a lad fourteen years of age, which had lain there a fortnight. The room where the body had been kept all that time was the living-room of the family."

'Instancing a few cases which had come under his notice during the past few days, the speaker said that in a small house of four rooms he found three families. One of the families consisted of man, wife, and eight children. The husband being out of work, the wife was earning a bare subsistence for them by trouser-making. In the

same house another poor woman was making match-boxes with what assistance she could get from her two children. In another case, where the husband, a consumptive, was unable to work, the wife was making pom-poms at 1s. 4d. a day, and there were three children to be brought up on these scanty earnings.

'House rents were so high, and the labour of the husband so uncertain, that in nine cases out of ten the woman was absolutely compelled to take in some form of home industry. It was impossible for her to look after her children properly. Could they wonder at the high mortality among children when the mother had to slave from morning to night, and often enough had to get the children to help her as well? . . .

'It was impossible for children who helped their mothers in sweated industries to get proper sleep or recreation. Sweating had a good deal to do with physical deterioration. There was another important point. As a Guardian of Bethnal Green, he found that women who took work from sweating firms had frequently to apply for out-relief to supplement their insufficient earnings. This meant that the State was practically subsidizing the sweater.

'Ruskin in one of his finest passages said that whenever a murder was committed in any community he would immediately call together the heads of the different households, and make them draw lots to decide which of them should be hanged. What Ruskin meant was that the whole community was responsible for what was going on in its midst. That exhibition, he hoped, would help to rouse London to a sense of its responsibility to the sweated and overcrowded people in its midst. Once get public opinion roused, and statesmen would soon find a way by which the evils of sweating could be got rid of and the poor enabled to live in homes comfortable, decent, and happy.'

By the year 1912 the Trades Boards Act had

created wages or trades boards in four trades, and the National Anti-Sweating League was assisting to establish these boards. But the remedy for these evils was not yet, and, in the meantime, Watts-Ditchfield felt that everything possible should be done to alleviate the suffering and distress that surrounded him. For this reason he was enthusiastic in his support of the Albert and Victoria Hospital Aid Society, which was established in 1873 by working men, at a time when the hospitals in the East End of London were urgently in need of funds. Great difficulty was also experienced by the poor in obtaining letters for the hospitals, and it was with this twofold object of assisting the hospitals in raising money and assisting the poor by the distribution of hospital letters obtained by this and other means that the society existed. In May 1907 Watts-Ditchfield was invited to be Chairman at the Annual Dinner, in recognition of the services that he had rendered to the Society. He looked upon this as an honour, for he was the first clergyman to be asked to act in this capacity. The Society had already paid over £9000 to the various hospitals, and had distributed over 41,000 letters among the deserving poor.

In October 1909 the Queen's Hospital for Children in Hackney Road was faced with a deficit of nearly £6000, which, if not raised, would mean that the hospital would be compelled to close sixty-two beds. This hospital was an untold blessing to the sick children of the East End. The calamity entailed is illustrated by the fact

that in the nine months of the year ending 30th September 1909, 200 in-patients and 3000 out-patients were dealt with over and above the numbers during the same period of the year 1908. The cry of the suffering children resounded in the sympathetic ears of Watts-Ditchfield. 'Feed my lambs' was his Master's commission, and he must needs obey. A meeting of the representatives of the clergy of all denominations, together with the Mayors of Bethnal Green, Hackney, Shoreditch, and Stoke Newington, and Lord William Cecil, Chairman of the House Committee, was summoned, over which Watts-Ditchfield presided in November 1909. As a result of the effort thus made, the debt was ultimately cleared. In 1911 nearly £3000 was raised by his instrumentality to clear a similar debt on the same institution.

In the parish of St. James-the-Less was situated the London branch of the National Children's Home, of which Dr. Gregory was the Principal. The vicar took a warm and practical interest in the work, and was a frequent visitor at the Home. He always found time to be present at the annual meeting, and was a welcome speaker on its platform. When the news of his appointment as bishop became known, the following article appeared in the March 1914 number of *Highways and Hedges* :

'The Home especially rejoices in the promotion of "Our Vicar," as we have been wont to call him. As vicar of Bethnal Green, Bonner Road came within his parish, and for many years he has been closely and

actively associated with our work. We owe much to him for his kindly interest and unfailing sympathy. Indeed, he is, and for many years has been, one of the truest and best friends of the Home. It is natural, therefore, that the Home should share in this spirit of rejoicing because of the well-deserved honour that has come to a man so truly and so well beloved.'

His interest in this branch of service was not confined to this particular Home, for he was a great admirer of Dr. Barnardo and his work. He and his staff acted as chaplains to the laundry section of the Homes, which was situated in Mare Street, Hackney. A Bible Class for these girls, whom the Home was trying to reclaim, was held in the Medical Mission on Sunday afternoons, and a service was held at the Home on Friday evenings.

The problem of unemployment affected materially life in a parish such as St. James-the-Less. The solution of the problem was essential to the welfare of the people, and thus the vicar felt constrained to accept the invitation to become a member of the Central Unemployed Committee.

At the time of the unemployment crisis of 1908, he expressed his views on the relief works suggested by the Government in an interview, the record of which appeared in the *Church Family Newspaper* on 10th October of that year :

'Take the employees who get work from the London County Council. In many ways the providing of this occupation has been most helpful to families in this district. On the other hand, there is a certain percentage of men—perhaps a small percentage (I do not wish to

exaggerate)—who become demoralized by this system of help. There is a danger that a certain number should expect, at the beginning of every winter, that work should be found for them without thrift or energy of their own. This danger, however, seems to me a small matter in comparison with the worst effects of unemployment. We are apt to think of the sufferings of the working man's wife and children when he falls out of the ranks of the bread-winners. The misery in these homes is, indeed, terrible, but there is something worse, and that is the demoralization of the man himself. Let me give you the case of a worker known to me, who had for years toiled steadily and faithfully. He was strictly sober, but his wages had not allowed him to put by. He had a family to support, and his money was all needed. This man had three rooms when I first knew him. A time came when he was thrown out of work. He tried hard to get another berth. Day after day he came home hopeless and despondent. One room was given up and then another. The furniture, some of which had been bought before his marriage, went piece by piece. After five months that man, who all his life had been steady and sober, yielded to drink and became completely demoralized. Do not think that this is an isolated instance. I quote it to you as a sample story. There are grave disadvantages in the provision of special relief works, but there are worse dangers to the man who goes on from month to month without any regular engagement. In other walks of life, you must remember a person has many means of filling up his time. The educated man has the library. He can turn to one employment when another fails, but the workman's time hangs heavily on his hands; he drifts from day to day. I could tell you of scores upon scores of good, responsible, hard-working artisans who have sunk through the sheer depression caused by a long spell of unemployment.'

It was about this time that the question of divorce came prominently before the public mind. This was a matter of profound importance, for it threatened to undermine the basis of family life, upon which our national character and traditions had been built. No one realized more fully than Watts-Ditchfield the gravity of the position. It was essential alike to the continuity and the prosperity of the nation that the sanctity of the marriage tie should remain inviolate. Summoned before the Royal Commission which was appointed to investigate the matter of divorce, he gave what the *Evening News* of 20th June 1910 described as 'striking evidence.' At the outset he distinguished between the real working classes and the submerged tenth, the latter of whom could not be touched by legislation, but could only be dealt with by moral influence. 'Among the real working classes there was a very high regard for matrimony, and, considering their environment, the marriage tie was extremely well observed. Her marriage lines were a woman's greatest possession. In my experience there is very little desire for divorce among the working classes, and to entrust local courts with the power of granting divorce would tend to lower the status of marriage.' The suggestion he went on to make was that a court should be formed with powers limited to investigation, but having the option of sending on the case to the higher court, if it were thought desirable. The cost of this court of investigation should be borne by the State. He felt strongly that the guilty person in a divorce suit should be

penalized in some way in regard to the matter of re-marriage. Moreover, he was of the opinion that the law should be amended so that the Court might have the power to punish by imprisonment the co-respondent in divorce proceedings. As at present constituted the law inflicted no punishment on the wealthy co-respondent, for the payment of damages meant nothing to him, and the man who had ruined his fellow-man's home and happiness went on his way unpunished.

To a man of Watts-Ditchfield's temperament, the simplicity and evangelistic fervour of the evangelical school of thought made its own appeal. Within its fold his burning zeal for the furtherance of the Gospel seemed to find incentive and inspiration. His compelling personality and the directness of his utterance, allied to a genius in winning souls for Christ, gave to him a powerful influence, which grew with the passing years, among the younger members of this school. His counsel was sought for and readily given in formulating the principles upon which the National Church League was to be moulded, and his gifts as a public speaker were used freely in enunciating these principles and enlarging its sphere of influence. He was an ardent supporter and strong advocate of the Church Missionary Society and the Church Pastoral Aid Society. The deputation work, undertaken on behalf of these societies, involved many journeyings throughout the length and breadth of England and gave to him a wide knowledge of Church life in his own land. A frequent and popular speaker at the Islington Clerical Meeting, Watts-Ditch-

field had no small share in broadening the basis upon which it had been founded, and thus extending its borders to include many of the younger evangelical clergy who otherwise would have held aloof from this well-known gathering, owing to the narrow traditions of its platform. Indirectly there sprang from the Islington Clerical Meeting a movement that was to transform the evangelical school and was to be the means of strengthening the general position of the Church of England. A group of six friends in the neighbourhood of Liverpool met in a friendly way to consider the welfare of the evangelical school. As a result of this, a meeting was held at the close of the Islington Conference in 1907, in the house of Mr. Frederick Warman of Highbury, whose son, the Rev. F. S. Guy Warman, later to become the second Bishop of Chelmsford, was the prime mover and the first honorary secretary of the movement. A two-days conference was held in the summer of 1907, and there was brought into being the band of 'brothers,' a title derived from the closing address of the chairman, the present Archbishop of Sydney. 'We have learnt to know each other, and catch that touch of indefinable sympathy which is itself an asset. May I quote a line from Shakespeare that has been running in my mind all through these days? "We few, we happy few, we band of brothers."' In the summer of 1909 Watts-Ditchfield was elected vice-chairman of the movement.

Groups of 'brothers' were formed in many of the large cities, and here the problems affecting the

future welfare of the Church were discussed and much useful knowledge gained. The publication of the English Church Manuals, under the conjoint editorship of Dr. Dawson Walker, Canon Wright, and Watts-Ditchfield, was the direct outcome of this movement. Issued at one penny each, and written by such leaders of the evangelical school as the then Bishops of Durham, Liverpool, Sodor and Man, and Jarrow, and the then Dean of Canterbury, the Manuals dealt with various phases of the work and doctrine of the Church of England, and served a useful purpose in disseminating knowledge and awakening an interest in such questions.

Towards the end of 1907 Watts-Ditchfield called together a conference in London in order to secure unity of purpose and effort among the evangelical clergy of the diocese. This was followed by a further conference between the trustees of the evangelical patronage trusts and representatives of the clergy. The result of this conference was reported to a meeting of the evangelical clergy of London, and thus the links that bound the members of this school together were forged more securely, and the spirit of sympathetic brotherhood fostered and matured.

It was essential for the efficiency of the Church that there should never be wanting a supply of candidates for Holy Orders fully equipped, mentally and spiritually, for the strenuous life awaiting them. The years of training are among the most important in the lives of such candidates. Realizing this, Watts-Ditchfield took a keen interest in the life and work of St. John's Hall,

Highbury, and as honorary secretary of the council rendered valuable service to students and college alike. Candidates were interviewed by him before their admission to the college, and thus, quite unconsciously, he was preparing himself for the more responsible office that he should be called upon to fulfil in regard to candidates for Holy Orders.

In the spring of 1909 he submitted to the Council of St. John's, Highbury, the proposals brought before the Upper House of Convocation by a committee of bishops with regard to the training of candidates for Holy Orders. These proposals foreshadowed a determination on the part of the bishops to insist, as far as possible, upon candidates taking an Arts Degree prior to Ordination. It was also suggested that such a resolution should come into operation in the year 1917. After careful consideration, the Highbury Council decided to afford to the students of St. John's Hall the opportunity of taking a degree at some university other than London. Various proposals, such as removing the college either to Oxford or Cambridge, or at least the founding of a hostel at one of these universities, were carefully considered, but, after prolonged discussion, it was felt that the best centre for the purpose under existing circumstances was Durham. Shortly before the end of the summer term of 1909 the Council made formal application to the Senate of Durham University for permission to found a hall within the university. The project was welcomed by the unanimous vote of the Senate, and the field was clear for practical steps to be

taken. In July 1909 a house situated at 6 South Bailey was taken on a lease of five years, with the option of renewal. This quaint, old-world street possesses a charm peculiarly its own, as it winds along, following the line of the ancient city wall, down to the gate that leads to the river and the Prebends' Bridge. Behind the house was a garden extending to the edge of the wooded ravine through which the Wear takes its winding way. The position was ideal—within easy reach of the cathedral, the university, the lecture-rooms, the river, and the playing-grounds, and yet sufficiently remote for all purposes of quiet, studious life. By judicious manipulation of the available space, this dwelling-house was transformed into a college which provided comfortable accommodation for twelve students. In addition to this there was a cosy dining-hall, a cheerful common room, and a spacious library.

By the kindness of the rector, the small Norman church of St. Mary-the-Less, situated immediately opposite, was used as the college chapel. By the vigorous co-operation of all concerned, the college was ready for occupation at the beginning of the Michaelmas Term of 1909, the dedication and formal opening taking place on 12th October 1909. In response to a letter of appeal written by Watts-Ditchfield, and published in the *Record* of 9th July 1909, came an offer of help, which, as the result of subsequent interviews between the writer and the donor, took the form of an anonymous gift of £5000. This generous benefaction enabled the Council to take steps to secure permanent premises, and, after careful

inquiry, a house situated at 4 South Bailey, and owned by Prebendary Fox, was purchased. Meanwhile, it became apparent that the hostel was destined to fulfil a much wider purpose than was the original intention of the founders. So long as the management was restricted to the Council of St. John's, Highbury, the sphere of influence must be limited. Under the guidance of Watts-Ditchfield a sub-committee was formed, and, after consultation with representatives of Durham University and of St. Aidan's College, Birkenhead, the Committee recommended that the whole property and interest of St. John's Hall, Durham, should be vested in a council on which St. John's Hall, Highbury, St. Aidan's College, Birkenhead, and the Church Missionary Society should be definitely represented. The Council of St. John's Hall, Highbury, adopted the scheme, and the Durham property was transferred to the newly constituted authority. A further donation of £2000 from the same generous source as the former benefaction made extension possible. But Watts-Ditchfield had a wide vision in regard to the future of St. John's Hall, Durham. In order to realize this vision a much larger sum of money would be required. He proposed, therefore, that an appeal should be issued, and, in order that it might be within the means of all to respond, he suggested that it take the form of a million shilling fund. The sympathy and practical support of former students of St. John's, Highbury, should thus be assured. The National Church League was asked to assist in this endeavour, and

the co-operation of the *Record* and other Church newspapers was sought for and obtained. The amount raised by this effort was to be divided between St. John's Hall, Durham, St. John's Hall, Highbury, and St. Aidan's College, Birkenhead.

With Dr. Guy Warman and Watts-Ditchfield as honorary secretaries, the appeal was launched under the title of the Million Shilling Ordination Fund. The necessity for such an effort was emphasized by the fact that the number of deacons ordained per 100,000 of the population had decreased from 2·7 in 1881 to 1·7 in 1901, and by the equally disquieting fact that out of 1100 grants allocated by the Church Pastoral Aid Society towards the stipends of assistant clergy, 126 could not be taken up, as there was an inadequate number of assistant clergy available. Although the response was not such as Watts-Ditchfield had hoped for, a sum of £8000 was raised by this fund. The next step in the forward movement of St. John's, Durham, was the lease and subsequently the purchase from the University of Durham of the massive stone building, known as the High School, which adjoined St. John's Hall. This was followed by the building of Cruddas House, named after Mr. W. D. Cruddas, the anonymous donor who had contributed a sum of £10,000 towards the foundation and extension of the college. Erected at a cost of between £4000 and £5000, Cruddas House consisted of twenty-five bedrooms and a similar number of sitting-rooms, with box, store-room, and other accommodation. By the acquisition of Prebendary Fox's house and

the High School, St. John's Hall had a fine width of frontage on to the South Bailey, and in the rear had a magnificent view over the richly wooded banks of the Wear to the delightful country beyond. Built in the solid rock on the slopes of the college grounds, Cruddas House faced the river, and presented an appearance of stateliness and grandeur from the opposite bank. On Thursday, 27th March 1913, Watts-Ditchfield, as Chairman of the Council of St. John's Hall, Durham, asked Miss Cruddas, who, with her sister, had continued their father's generous support and interest in St. John's Hall, to perform the formal act of opening the new building.

Speaking on this occasion, the principal, Dr. Dawson Walker, said :

' The Hall began with a little band of five students in October 1909. Last term we had forty-two, forty matriculated students and two probationers. With the completion of Cruddas House we shall be able to accommodate fifty-two men in the Hall, and we are trusting our numbers may reach that total in Michaelmas Term of this year. The Hall, it should be remembered, is in a very real sense a unique institution. It is not like St. Aidan's or St. John's, Highbury. They are non-graduate colleges. It is not like Wycliffe Hall or Ridley Hall. They are post-graduate colleges. St. John's (Durham) represents the first occasion when the Evangelical School of Thought in the Church of England has founded and inaugurated a college which is a constituent college in one of our English universities.'

The following suggestive paragraph occurs in the *Record* of 4th April 1913 :

' There is a strong Council or Governing Body associated with the Hall, but in all the negotiations there was

one man who took the leading part—the Rev. J. E. Watts-Ditchfield. . . .

‘ His was the mind that first conceived the idea of a Hall, closely associated with the University, given up to the training of Evangelical candidates for Holy Orders; his was the dominating force that overcame all difficulties; and his was the inspiring influence that attracted to the scheme the loyal co-operation and warm-hearted support of many others.’

In recognition of his social service and his contribution to education in the inauguration and establishment of St. John’s Hall, Durham, the Senate of the University of Durham had conferred upon Watts-Ditchfield the honorary degree of Master of Arts on 21st June 1910.

The Bishop of Jarrow, in presenting Watts-Ditchfield for the degree, said :

‘ It may be conceded that the efficiency of any movement, whether social, commercial, or religious, depends largely for its success upon two factors—“ the man ” and “ the machine.” The worker trained for service, and the machinery adequate for his work; these in combination achieve success. In no sphere of our national life is this more needed than in our Church and her activities. The highest-trained ministry and the best-equipped machinery for service, these are two essentials for the fulfilment of her high mission to the world. If it be true that “ the gifted man ” is he who sees the essential point, then he whom I have the honour to present to you may be so described. As the virtual founder of St. John’s Hall, as the head of a settlement for university men in East London, where trained experience in some of the most pressing social problems of our day may be gained, as a preacher whose “ call to men ” has sounded in more than one university, he has perceived the need of that first essential in our Church’s work—the man prepared

by training and experience. In his East End parish, with its extraordinary multiplicity of buildings, its institutes, its model lodging-house, and its missions, each an evidence of his ceaseless activity, no less than his wise statesmanship, he has recognized that second essential—the well-equipped machinery of organization. In conferring the degree of M.A. upon him this University expresses its high appreciation of his splendid contribution to social and religious life; in his person it declares its hearty welcome to those who, on a sound basis, and on wise lines, establish fresh centres of training in its midst.'

The following resolution passed at the meeting of the Council of St. John's College, 11th October 1923, after his death, testifies to the work of Watts-Ditchfield in this connexion :

'The Council of St. John's College, Durham, hereby records its profound sorrow for the death of its President, the late John Edwin Watts-Ditchfield, Bishop of Chelmsford. He took the initial steps for the founding of the College. He watched over its progress from the beginning. He secured the sympathy and co-operation of those who have enriched it by their benefactions. In the midst of a life of manifold activities he made time to be present at the meetings of the Council, and devoted himself to the work of it with unsparing energy.

'The Council hereby expresses its deep sense of gratitude for, and appreciation of, his whole life of Christian work and service, especially for his contribution to the creation and maintenance of this College.'

Moreover, by his profound knowledge and clear enunciation of the problems vital to the life of the Church, Watts-Ditchfield had won for himself an eminent position in her public life and ministry. In 1907 he spoke at the Church Congress held in

Yarmouth on the subject of 'The Church and the Labour Movement'; in 1908, at Manchester, on 'Secularist Propaganda'; in 1909, at the Albert Hall, London, on 'The Neglect of Public Worship'; in 1910, at Cambridge, on 'Prayer Book Revision'; and, after his visit to the Dominions, on 'The Mutual Relation of Civilized Nations' at Southampton in 1913.

On 7th October 1900, he preached the Ordination Sermon in St. Paul's Cathedral, and subsequently was a frequent preacher both in St. Paul's and in Westminster Abbey. On 14th November 1909, he preached a forceful and interesting sermon on 'The Call to Serve' before the University of Cambridge in Great St. Mary's Church, and again, as Select Preacher of the University of Cambridge, he delivered a striking sermon on 'The Regeneration of England' on 9th November 1913. A humorous incident is recorded on the latter occasion. Whilst partaking of tea after the service, Watts-Ditchfield remarked to an undergraduate, 'One needs a cup of tea after the University Sermon.' Failing to recognize the identity of the speaker, the undergraduate, much to the amusement of the preacher, replied, 'Why, was it as dry as all that?'

It was no empty honour that the University of Cambridge conferred upon Watts-Ditchfield, in selecting him for the important post of Lecturer in Pastoral Theology in the year 1913.

Full advantage was taken of the privilege thus afforded, for the lectures delivered in the Divinity Schools, Cambridge, during the Lent Term of

1913, were among the most interesting and illuminating of a valuable series of lectures given under the same auspices year by year.

In the midst of a life of ceaseless activity it seems incredible that time should have been found to write books. But such was the case. During his summer holidays, and in the small hours of morning, Watts-Ditchfield contributed three volumes, two of which rank among the most helpful in the school of practical theology. His work, *Fishers of Men, or How to Win the Men*, was first published in 1899, and from that time has been regarded as a standard work on Men's Services. A second edition was called for in 1906, and a third edition in 1912. In a review of the second edition, the *Guardian* of 17th October 1906 says :

' We are very glad to see a new edition of *Fishers of Men, or How to Win the Men*, by the Rev. J. E. Watts-Ditchfield. It would seem a truism to say that the subject dealt with is the most important that a minister of religion can study, were it not that practically it has been often neglected in favour of " children's work," and other less direct efforts to attain the supreme end, in other words the Christianizing of the family. As Mr. Watts-Ditchfield observes : " We have the children an hour on Sunday, and perhaps an hour at the Band of Hope ; but all the rest of the week, how frequently is the influence of the home either hostile or indifferent ? Is it any wonder that the example of the home prevails, and away the child goes to swell the ranks of the lapsed ? But let us get hold of the man, the head of the house, and what is the result ? The whole tone of the home is changed, the wife soon won, and the Sunday School becomes the auxiliary, and not the substitute, for home religion."

‘As to the author’s methods, set forth in these pages, they are in a sense simple enough—“sympathy, single-heartedness, self-devotion, simplicity, entire dependence on the Almighty, and an unflagging zeal”—so the Archdeacon of London puts it in the appreciative introduction which he contributes. But he would be a wise man indeed who had nothing to learn from the lessons of the volume before us, lessons in the application of shrewd common sense, and of careful, patient thought to problems which are not to be solved by mere good will. Let us add that this is not merely a book for clergymen, but for all Christian workers who can profit by the teaching of experience.’

The second book, published in 1911, was a volume of sermons entitled *Here and Hereafter*. The following review from the *Guardian* of 2nd August 1912 indicates the nature of this work and its prospective sphere of usefulness :

‘This volume of sermons makes it easy to understand the influence which Mr. Watts-Ditchfield exercises as a preacher in the East End of London and in a far wider area. They are distinctly the sermons of a parish priest, always plain, sensible, and cogent, never over the heads of an average congregation, and full of a manly earnestness. Religion, to the preacher, is always a life rather than a theology, though he is wise enough not to despise theology, and is capable of discoursing on it with sound judgment when the occasion serves. Mr. Watts-Ditchfield would probably be taken as a typical and much-respected leader of the younger Evangelicals. If so, this volume of sermons is another indication of the fact that, quietly and without observation, the central party of which Canon Denton Thompson has lately written, has come into being. Plainly, the preacher has learned much from Broad Churchmen and High Churchmen. He has laid the men of his own time who live and think under

contribution. He has retained all that is best in Evang-
gelicalism and has lost its narrowness. He is interesting
just because he is not an isolated phenomenon, but
because he exemplifies what is coming to be the most
vigorous and effective type of the Anglican priest. He
belongs to those men who are what they are, not because
they have a genius for compromise, but because they can
understand their own time and are capable of learning
from those who, from whatever quarter, have something
genuinely their own to contribute to the common stock
of religious experience.'

The Lectures in Pastoral Theology, delivered
in the Divinity Schools, Cambridge, in the Lent
Term of 1913, were published the same year under
the title of *The Church in Action*, with the follow-
ing introduction :

' I commend this volume with the utmost heartiness
and good will to all readers. The Lectures were delivered
last Lent Term in the Divinity Schools, Cambridge, by
the Lecturer in Pastoral Theology for the year 1913, to
a large audience of Undergraduates, whom he attracted
and retained from first to last : and small wonder : for
the Lectures were not only full of deep spirituality and
true earnestness, but were also eminently practical, sane,
wide-minded, enriched with apt illustrations and humor-
ous anecdotes.

' I commend them, therefore, in their published form :

' *First*, To those who heard them : they will be glad to
be reminded of many a vigorous home thrust as well as of
valuable advice. *Second*, To Ordinands in general, who will
find lessons here and counsel drawn from a long experience
of parish work singularly blessed by God. *Third*, To a
wider Public or Religious Belief, who cannot fail to be at
once benefited and entertained by the perusal of these pages.

' Adsit Deus ipse hujusmodi operibus.

' S. A. DONALDSON, *Vice-Chancellor.*'

The *Cambridge Review* of 29th April 1914 writes :

‘ One cannot review the Pastoral Lectures delivered in Cambridge, 1913, but in the light of the fact that their author is now Bishop of Chelmsford. No more fortunate accident could have happened for him or for his diocese than that he should be heralded and introduced by this book. True, some paragraphs, notably those on Confession, show that he does not understand the opposite point of view altogether ; but that only makes the feat more remarkable, that he has written a scrupulously fair book, conspicuously, eagerly fair. It is a fine omen for his rule at Chelmsford. The most Catholic priest, so long as he works, can trust him. No Protestant, except he work, will receive love or favour.

‘ This is the first impression of *The Church in Action*—its fairness to all methods. The second is the vigour of the book, and the third, its matter-of-fact practicality. . . .

‘ The Bishop is strongest at the point where the Church as a whole is weakest—on the work which, owing partly to the courage needed, and partly to the awkward hours of busy workers, the clergy are most apt to shirk. As he says, the problem of any parish is solved if the clergy win the men. The man will see to it that the rest of the family goes to church. And they always can be won, if the men’s work (not the children’s, that has proved to be the wrong way round) is put first, and their clergy arrange their day primarily with a view to visiting them.

‘ The book then is good ; indeed, it can only be compared with the present Bishop of London’s lectures here in 1895, *Work in Great Cities*. The Church in London, both within and beyond the border, is happy in the sympathy and practical vigour of its chiefs.’

CHAPTER VII

C.E.M.S. MISSIONER

IN August 1911, whilst enjoying a quiet holiday at Criccieth, in North Wales, there came a great surprise to Watts-Ditchfield in the form of an invitation from the Church of England Men's Society in Australia to go out the following year and visit all the centres of population. Extracts from his reply show Watts-Ditchfield's mind concerning this matter :

‘ Under any circumstances such a request coming as it does from so important an organization as the New South Wales C.E.M.S. would command careful consideration, but when it is endorsed by my old friend, the Archbishop, it becomes a matter which on personal as well as on public grounds must not lightly be refused. I need scarcely say that the question as to where my duty lies is not easy to answer. The claims of my parish, and also at this time the claims of the wider work undertaken outside my parish, are such as to cause hesitation ere I say “ Yes ” ; and I feel that before giving a definite acceptance I ought to be certain that my visit is likely, by God's blessing, to be of real assistance to the Australian Church. Is this likely ? Mr. Woollcombe's visit is so recent that one wonders whether the time is ripe for a somewhat similar visit ; but you on the spot are of course more capable of deciding this question than we are at home.’ . . . ‘ I can only say that if I come I shall hope to come in the fulness of the Spirit and with a living message.

Will you ask all your friends to make the whole question one of earnest prayer ? ’

The Chairman of the Council (the Archbishop of York) and the Executive of the C.E.M.S. at home urged upon Watts-Ditchfield the duty of accepting the invitation ; so that, on the receipt of a satisfactory reply from Australia to his letter, a cable of acceptance was sent. This was made possible by the fact that the Rev. E. A. Dunn, who had won by long years of sympathetic and loyal service at St. James-the-Less the love and confidence of clergy and people alike, was willing to remain in charge of the parish. The parishioners were quite willing to spare their vicar for this wide field of service, and pledged themselves to loyal co-operation in the furtherance of the work during the absence of their leader. One timorous soul expressed doubt as to the wisdom of allowing their beloved vicar to undertake such a mission, ‘ for,’ she added, ‘ them Australian natives are such treacherous people.’ This incident provoked laughter when told by Watts-Ditchfield to his Australian audiences. Much correspondence ensued as to the extent and nature of the visit. Finally, it was decided that he should leave England in March, visit Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand, and then return by way of Canada and address congregations wherever it was possible. Writing to the Secretary of the C.E.M.S. in Australia concerning the proposed programme of work, he says :

‘ As I have already said, I shall, while in Australia, leave myself entirely in your hands, but I sincerely trust

you will not spare me. The days spent in travelling will be rest, and I shall be quite prepared to do anything you wish, but I would suggest that in addition to Mass Meetings for Men, I should hold conferences first of all with clergy only so as to discuss methods of action, and then other conferences with clergy and laity together, or with the laity alone. I am anxious to meet the real spiritual forces first, because upon them, under God, will rest largely, in the highest sense of the term, the success of my visit.

‘I hope your Executive understands that I am not coming out as an adherent of any party or school of thought in the Church, but simply as a Churchman and as an official of the C.E.M.S. anxious to promote the spiritual objects for which it was founded. I trust, therefore, that I may be so regarded and that in all arrangements I may be sent to any and every place where a visit from me might be considered serviceable. I want to make this quite clear to all concerned.’

The winter was spent in preparation for the tour which was destined to exert a powerful influence on the life of the Church overseas, and to be of lasting benefit to the life and ministry of the C.E.M.S. Messenger. On 23rd March the Bethnal Green Federation bade Godspeed to their president, and presented him with a handsome travelling bag. There were farewell gatherings, with presentations, in connexion with the various organizations in the parish. The vicar took farewell of his congregations on Sunday, 24th March. The Men’s Service in the afternoon was attended by the Mayor, the Chairman of the Board of Guardians, and representatives of other local bodies. At Evensong the church was crowded to its utmost capacity.

On the following evening one hundred officials of the church—wardens, sidesmen, committee of the Men's Service, etc.—entertained the vicar, his wife, and daughter, to dinner in the church parlour. The impression made on the vicar is best recorded in the words of his diary :

' I have never felt anything like it. It was extraordinary. The love and loyalty were unsurpassed, and I can never forget it. They gave me this book, the work of two of my men. I went home filled with joy, and yet so saddened to think how little I deserved it all.'

Eight hundred communicants assembled in the large hall to bid Godspeed to their beloved vicar on the evening before his departure. In true family spirit the whole staff assembled in the study on the morning of the 27th, when the vicar read Psalm 121, and then gave them his blessing. The evening was spent at Dover with his loved ones, and on the 28th he crossed from Dover to join the *Mantua* at Marseilles. His diary is instructive at this point :

' How alone I felt, and yet not alone, for He is with me. Of that I am sure. How I shall need Him. When I think of the hundreds of clergy, and the thousands of men to whom I shall speak, I can indeed say and feel, "Who is sufficient for these things?" But He who has called me will supply all my need, and so I shall go trusting in Him.'

At Port Said he transhipped to the *China*.

Many of his friends were delighted when they heard of the long sea voyage, for they hoped that the enforced leisure and the freedom from responsibility would strengthen his health. Watts-Ditch-

field, however, looked at the matter from a different point of view. He was still the 'fisher of men,' and life on a mail-boat was only another opportunity for service. Moreover, his own parish was ever in his thought and prayer, and time had to be found to complete the preparation necessary for his mission.

Each Sunday he celebrated in the early morning, gave an address at Morning Prayer, and held a service in the evening. The closing entry on his first Sunday at sea reads : ' I went into the cabin at nine o'clock, or seven o'clock their time, and thought and prayed for them all.' This was the time of the Confirmation in St. James-the-Less.

In a letter written in the Mediterranean to the *Parish Magazine*, he states : ' Among the passengers were Lord and Lady William Cecil, and I induced the latter to promise to open our Flower Show on 13th July, so you see I am still doing something for dear old St. James-the-Less.'

The apparent indifference to Good Friday and Easter Day was the cause of much concern. Permission was obtained to hold a service in the early morning of Good Friday, but the congregation consisted of one ; after which we read : ' I wonder how many in this ship, passengers or crew, will think of Calvary to-day. As I look at the Lascars cleaning the ship, and as I think of the English on board, need I wonder that India is not yet converted.' And as the day closes : ' It has been the strangest of Good Fridays—bridge, cards, quoits, games, all day long. Where, O where, is the Christ ? '

On the Saturday he writes : ' I have managed to get Holy Communion for to-morrow morning, Easter Day, but am not yet certain as to whether we can have a morning service, as we reach Aden at noon.' And on Easter Day : ' At 7.30 ten of us gathered in the music saloon. It was a nice quiet little service, and one could not but realize that He was there. The *Presence* was very real, and I felt much helped, but after the service was over I did want to see my loved ones. Then I found a notice up that after all we were going to have Morning Prayer.'

Later on we read : ' Since I first came on board I have tried to do eight hours' steady work daily, and am preparing for my work. How unfit I feel.' And again : ' I am more and more realizing the big task which awaits me in Australia. I do pray that I may have " the power." If I can only give a lofty ideal, even that of Christ, and get men to desire to reach up to it, and at the same time make them realize that He who is the Ideal will come into them, and that if He obtains complete control, then all will be well.' In another place : ' I am reading the Gospels through, and I spend a good deal of time with Him who is with my loved ones.' And : ' I got in several talks with people to-day, and hope I have done some good, at any rate. But life on board a ship like this reveals what comparatively little headway Christianity has made even on our own people. There is still much to do.' Again we find the significant phrase : ' How unequal I feel for the task before me.'

A most interesting and instructive day was spent

in Colombo, during which the Church Missionary Society's church and school were visited, and an address given to the children by means of an interpreter. The entry in his diary for the day concludes : ' Thus ends a day which will give me food for thought for many a day.'

On leaving Colombo, Watts-Ditchfield was anxious to reach his destination and to commence the work. The grandeur of the wide expanse of ocean, the clearness of the air and the vivid beauty of the sunsets appealed to him ; but a life of inactivity was not congenial to his temperament. ' We have had wonderful weather, but a long sea voyage is very trying to me,' he writes.

On Tuesday, 23rd April, the *China* arrived at Fremantle. His diary again reveals the manner in which he faced his great task :

' A *never-to-be-forgotten* day. . . . As I set foot on Australian soil I lifted up my heart to God and said, " Just as I step on shore do Thou, O Christ, step into me and use me all the time I am in this land." O that I may be used of God in this place ! '

Watts-Ditchfield was encouraged greatly by the welcome he received. Immediately the boat was berthed, Canon Moore and eight of the C.E.M.S. men came on board to greet him, and telegrams of welcome were received from all parts of Australia. The Bishop, the Archdeacon, and the Dean of Perth were awaiting his arrival on shore. This was typical of his reception throughout the whole of the tour. Careful preparation had been made for the mission, a special Service of Prayer issued by the C.E.M.S., and the following letter from

the Archbishop of York circulated throughout Australia :

‘ BISHOPSTHORPE, YORK,
‘ 17th February 1912.

‘ As one of the Presidents of the C.E.M.S. and as Chairman of its Council, I am deeply interested in the visit which Mr. Watts-Ditchfield is about to pay in connexion with our Society, to Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand. His personal gifts, his loyal churchmanship, and his very special experience in the work of the Church among men will, I know, ensure for him a welcome from all members of our Society, and all sections of our Church across the seas, and also from all who feel that any earnest and sincere message spoken by a man who has won the right to speak to his fellow-men on behalf of the Kingdom of God must help forward the common life of our English-speaking nations. With all heartiness I wish him Godspeed in his mission, and I pray that God’s blessing may rest upon it.—COSMO EBOR.’

The trip to Perth by steamer on the River Swan, and the drive through the park to the city, revealed much of Australia’s natural beauty. It was characteristic of the man that he should go at once to the cathedral and there intercede in silence for God’s blessing and guidance.

His mission in Australia opened the same evening with a meeting for men in the Victoria Hall, Fremantle. Watts-Ditchfield lost no time in placing his own conception of the Church’s attitude towards men before the Australian people. ‘ Personally, I put men first. If you get the man, you get his wife and children. On the other hand, if you start with the children at Sunday School, and have them an hour or two a week, the good

you do is lost in the influence of the home life. Sunday Schools should be the auxiliary, not the substitute for home religion. In other words, I would rather give a child a good home than a good Sunday School. We want to get at the man, and the home will follow.'

Accompanied by the Bishop of Perth, he made an early start on Wednesday, 24th April, in order to reach Bunbury, which is 115 miles distant from Perth by rail, in time to address first a service for men, and then a meeting of the C.E.M.S. On the following day he returned to Perth, and thence to Claremont for a men's service. On the Friday the great engineering works of the Western Australian Government Railways at Midland Junction, with 4000 men employed, were visited, and an address given during the luncheon hour. A train journey of seventy miles enabled him to speak to a meeting of communicants at Northam in the evening. Returning to Perth on Saturday, the remainder of the day was fully occupied in interviewing the leaders of the C.E.M.S. On Sunday he was present at the early celebration of the Holy Communion, and then preached in Fremantle Parish Church at Matins. A mass meeting was held in the Melrose Theatre, Perth, in the afternoon, and an address was given to the 850 men present. An interruption by an infidel lecturer from Bethnal Green was reminiscent of home. In the evening a sermon was preached to a crowded congregation in the cathedral. A conference with the bishop and clergy was held on Monday morning, and the afternoon was spent in interviews.

The evening saw the conclusion of his work in Western Australia, and his last service was a private meeting of clergy and members of the C.E.M.S. in St. John's Parish Hall, West Perth.

A representative of each branch was invited to speak, and then Watts-Ditchfield summarized his impressions and expressed his opinion as to the future policy of the Church, and more particularly of the C.E.M.S., in that part of Australia. With a population of about 300,000 people spread over an area of 500,000 square miles, and with parishes of the size of Yorkshire, in which there was only one clergyman at work, it was extraordinarily difficult to maintain the Church services and to minister to the spiritual needs of the various congregations. The work of evangelization must suffer, and yet that was the Church's mission. He strongly urged the appointment of a clerical secretary of the C.E.M.S. for the whole province, who could also be a canon missionary, and whose sole duty it would be to organize and help forward the evangelistic work of the Church. A stipend of £300 a year would be necessary, and towards this he promised to raise £100 a year for three years. The man was better than his word. In July of that year a cheque for £400 was received by the Bishop of Perth from Lady Pearce, £100 towards the stipend of the missionary in 1913, and £300 for clergy stipends. In addition to this, £100 would be paid in 1914 and 1915 for the missionary, and £600 was sent to the Colonial and Continental Church Society for the diocese of Perth.

The bishop, writing to Watts-Ditchfield on 12th July 1912, says :

‘ I do not know how to thank you for what you have done. This means that we can now have our missionary to stir up chiefly *men*, and I can, as soon as I find suitable men, start three new missions. It is splendid. . . I really am very grateful. You do not know what a burden it has taken off my shoulders—to hear “ Come over and help us,” and be able to do nothing, is miserable.’

The following extract from an editorial in the Western Australian *Daily News* of 27th April 1912 reflects the impression created at the very beginning of his mission :

‘ The Rev. J. E. Watts-Ditchfield shoulders a Sheffield-steel blazing weapon in the shape of a warm and convincing personality—a personality calculated to lop off the foliage of indolence and intolerance, a weapon destined at once to bite hard, right to the very trunk of indifference and partial disbelief.’ . . ‘ There is a twinkle in his eye that tells of the utmost good humour. He has a broad, high forehead, and a manner of earnest conversation as if he were concerned in your spiritual welfare and yours alone. Something wholesomely appealing lies in his manner and speech. Perhaps this is due to the fact that he is a man’s man. Superficially he gives the impression of one who is not merely inured to the world, but lives in it through sheer joy of association. One impulsively asks oneself—“ This man seems happy. I like him. What knowledge can he give that will help me to a like state ? ” Look out ; take heed ; the trail blazer is at work and great raw gaping chips are already falling from the tree trunk. The personality of the man is slowly cutting its way for the benefit of the cause—the cult of a better Christian observance by men.’

On Tuesday afternoon, 30th April, he sailed in the *Omrah*, and, after a very smooth passage across the Great Australian Bight, arrived in Adelaide on Saturday, 4th May. The programme of work was similar to that undertaken in Western Australia. A sermon was preached in the cathedral on the Sunday morning, and after lunch with the Governor of South Australia, an address was given to 900 men in the afternoon. In the evening he preached at Hindmarsh.

During the ensuing days conferences of the clergy and of the lay delegates of the C.E.M.S. were held, the railway works at Islington were visited, and an address given to the men. Much time was spent in interviews. At the mass meeting for men in the Victoria Hall, with which the work in South Australia closed, the suggestion was made that a clerical secretary of the C.E.M.S. should be appointed for the state. On Sunday, 12th May, Watts-Ditchfield arrived in Melbourne, and departed at 6.15 the following morning for Albury, where he was received by the C.E.M.S. at a public dinner in the hotel. As there was a little time before the meeting a game of billiards was played with one of the local clergy, in which the visitor proved victorious. The game was watched with much interest, and showed the human side of the missionary. A public meeting and conference were held, and then Watts-Ditchfield departed by train and arrived in Wagga Wagga at 3 A.M. on the Tuesday. Here there was a morning celebration and sermon, an afternoon conference, and a meeting in the evening.

The visitor was much impressed by the fact that the twenty-two clergy present travelled an average of 159 miles each in order to be present. A visit to the Government Experimental Farm proved instructive to the missionary, and enabled him to hold a further conference and meeting in that district. Breaking his journey at Cootanundra for a meeting, Watts-Ditchfield arrived in Sydney on Friday, 17th May.

During his stay here sermons were preached in the city and suburban churches in the morning and evening, and men's services held in the afternoon of each Sunday. Mid-day addresses were given to congregations of men in the cathedral, at St. Philip's and at St. James's in the city. The great engineering works at Mort's Dock and Clyde were visited, and addresses given to the men. At the latter the speaker quickly created a bond of sympathy between himself and the men by the informal remark, 'This hot weather makes one thirsty,' followed by the request, 'Can any one give me a cup of tea?' Many cups of tea were offered, one of which was promptly and gratefully accepted.

The men were delighted with the story of one of his parishioners who, in company with a number of women from the parish, visited the Zoo. Standing before a kangaroo she asked what it was. 'Oh, that's a native of Australia,' was the reply. 'Good gracious me! and to think that my sister married one of them!' was the exclamation of the amazed woman.

Moore Theological College and the University

were not overlooked in the programme. A Quiet Day in the cathedral was attended by 200 clergy, and proved most helpful. The annual meeting in connexion with the Diocesan Festival of the Home Mission Union, held in the Town Hall, and presided over by Lord Chelmsford, the Governor, afforded 5000 people the opportunity of hearing the C.E.M.S. missionary. In a letter from New South Wales, which was published in the October number of the *Men's Magazine*, we read :

‘ On Saturday, 15th June, he gave a splendid lecture, entitled “ London as I know it,” which was illustrated by lantern views of that great city. In the Town Hall on that occasion, something like four thousand people paid for admission. On such a subject you can imagine Mr. Watts-Ditchfield feeling at home, and so much at home was he that for over two hours he kept that vast audience simply hanging on his words, and at the close of the lecture he was accorded a tremendous reception.’

On 27th May, Watts-Ditchfield journeyed over the Blue Mountains to Bathurst, where a meeting was held on the same evening. Of this meeting the *Bathurst National Advocate* of 28th May 1912 writes thus :

‘ Seldom, if ever, has such a large representative gathering of men assembled in Bathurst, as that which was present at the Masonic Hall last night, to listen to an address “ To Men Only ” by the Rev. J. E. Watts-Ditchfield. All shades were represented amongst the audience, and if the great enthusiasm which prevailed throughout the proceedings can be taken as a criterion, then many men of the Church of England who have displayed indifference in the past, will be found amongst the most enthusiastic workers in the future.’

Leaving Bathurst at 3 A.M. the following morning, the long and uninteresting train journey was made to Cobar, which is 464 miles by rail from Sydney, and the centre of the copper-mining industry. The parish of Cobar is 12,000 square miles in area, with a population of 15,000, and only one clergyman to minister to their spiritual needs.

Breaking the journey at Dubbo, where the Bush Brotherhood was visited, and again at Orange and Portland, Sydney was reached on 1st June. An extended tour was begun on 19th June, when he travelled north over the well-known Hawkesbury River Bridge, and spent some time in the diocese of Newcastle, whose chief industry is coal-mining. Continuing this journey north, a fortnight was spent in the dioceses of Brisbane and Rockhampton in Queensland. The return journey was made by means of the North Coast, with its rich soil and wonderful natural grasses. Passing from the diocese of Grafton over the mountains, some time was spent in the diocese of Armidale, which comprises the fertile New England district. Sydney was reached on 11th July, where a meeting of the Executive of the C.E.M.S. on the same evening, and a celebration of the Holy Communion in the cathedral on the following morning, concluded the mission there.

Leaving Sydney on 13th July, Watts-Ditchfield spent some days in the diocese of Goulburn before leaving New South Wales to commence his work in Victoria. Visiting the diocese of Wangaratta on the way, he arrived in Melbourne on 19th July,

where two months were spent in fulfilling a programme of engagements similar to that undertaken in Sydney. It was at this period that the strain of continuous travelling and speaking began to tell on his health, and medical attention was necessary. The dioceses of Gippsland, Ballarat, and Bendigo were also visited during the course of the mission to Victoria. On Wednesday, 21st August, the Governor of Victoria presided over an enthusiastic meeting of 2000 men in the Melbourne Town Hall to hear the missionary's last public speech.

A conference of C.E.M.S. members, under the presidency of the Archbishop of Melbourne, on 22nd August, was a fitting close to the four months of strenuous work in the continent of Australia, during the course of which he had travelled nearly 5000 miles by rail, had used 400 vehicles of various descriptions, and on one tour alone had slept in fourteen different beds in fifteen nights. At the conference it was decided to appoint a paid secretary for the province, so that Victoria followed the example of Western Australia and also of New South Wales in this respect. At Sydney Watts-Ditchfield had asked the members of the conference to stand in silent prayer before recording their promises of support to the fund from which the secretary would receive his salary. Promises for a sum of £350 were received in this way. A similar course was pursued at Melbourne, and met with an even more encouraging response, as the promises amounted to £564.

The publicity given by the press and the

detailed reports of the meetings testified to the widespread interest that was manifested in the visit of Watts-Ditchfield to Australia, and were indicative of the magnetic appeal of his personality to the manhood of that land. One of the leading daily papers, the *Sydney Daily Telegraph*, devoted a long article in its issue of 22nd June 1912 to the man and his work. The following extracts are of interest :

‘ No one can be in the company of Mr. Watts-Ditchfield without coming to see that he is a man who could never waste breath or bandy words about how a thing is to be done. He just does it. . . . He is a Churchman—and rather much of a High Churchman at that—right down to the ground. He does not so much tell you so as, somehow, make you take it for granted. He seems to be in blissful ignorance of the devices of modern times suggestive in some quarters of an ecclesiastical climbdown. . . . As for theology, there is the same absence of mere surface controversy. The great trunk lines of Christian truth are taken for granted ; and you find yourself unconsciously in agreement.

‘ The refusal of compromise is perhaps never more in evidence than when the missionary is insisting on a strong Christianity that acts on the square in regard to every claim and relation of life. If he insists that workmen must have a just week’s pay, he insists none the less on the same workmen doing an honest week’s work. As one listens he feels that in their hearts men do not want, in this realm, at any rate, small and faltering compromises. This man imbues you subtly with an involuntary scorn of such things. You wonder how you ever entertained or tolerated them. You are just compelled along the opposite line of thought and motive.

‘Mr. Watts-Ditchfield is an incorrigible optimist. “The Old Country,” he tells you, “is anything but played out. The Old Church is alive. It is very much alive ; it is gripping the situation, and winning the men.” The missionary also knows the value of wholesome good humour, and indulges in many a sally into the realm of humour, without the qualifying prefix. And good humour and sane optimism are hard to resist. But his secret lies in the fact that he is every inch a man ; a man on right lines, and burning with all a good, brave man’s enthusiasm. It takes a diamond to cut a diamond. It similarly takes a man to catch a man. Mr. Watts-Ditchfield is catching them ; and this is a hundred thousand times better than merely catching on with them.’

In the *Sydney Diocesan Magazine* of 1st August 1912, the Archbishop of Sydney writes thus :

‘It seems only yesterday that I saw the Rev. J. E. Watts-Ditchfield alight on the Sydney platform, a familiar figure to me from my friendship with him in the old land. But now he is a familiar figure to an endless number of Australian Churchmen, and a personal friend to very many. The work that he has done will last. It was, as prophesied, an effective supplement to that of Mr. Woollcombe, but with individuality of its own. He has approved himself to men of all schools of thought, and will be remembered as the man who had done things and inspired others to hope that they might be equally effective. His spiritual personality was an inspiration. Always alert, always cheerful, bubbling over with energy, full of a humour of his own, he yet carried men away by his downright spiritual earnestness and his buoyant enthusiasm. He laid deep and firm the foundation of men’s work for God in our ancient Church upon the basis of the Communicant’s

duty and privilege. In this he bound the Church together, and I am persuaded that we shall witness results of his visit.'

The Archbishop of Melbourne, in a letter dated 23rd August, wrote thus :

' You have indeed rendered my diocese a great service in bringing such a spirit of prayer and work showing how the Church must unite in the great task before us. Your memory will long be held in gratitude and your words in recollection.'

The editor of the *Church Standard*, in a letter to Watts-Ditchfield on 2nd September 1912, writes : ' I am sure your visit has not only strengthened the C.E.M.S., but has brought men of all parties nearer together.'

His sympathy for others, and his understanding of their outlook on life, won for him the friendship of very many. The *Church Record* of 20th June 1912 writes : ' He is the very embodiment of his own advice with regard to addressing open-air meetings, " Hit hard, but don't be hard." '

The following extract from a letter written by the treasurer of the C.E.M.S. in New South Wales expressed what was felt by very many in regard to his visit :

' I felt that some of the poorly attended meetings demonstrated how poorly the Executive Officers had been able to lay the foundation of the C.E.M.S. work, and how inefficient the forces were that could only bring so few together to listen to God's messenger from the other side of the globe. Many a time I have sat behind you and prayed that not only would His Holy Spirit be with you in your discourse, but that He would give you

strength to overcome the feeling of disappointment which it would have been only natural for you to feel. You were, however, in face of all difficulties so brave and cheerful that I found that any little thing that I could do to make your way less dreary was indeed a blessed privilege. You cannot realize what a comfort it was to me to have you with us, and what a help your cheery talks and kindly advice always were to me.'

With gratitude for the work done, mingled with regret at the departure of one whom they had come to look upon as a personal friend, a representative body of men assembled to bid farewell and God-speed to Watts-Ditchfield as he left Melbourne on 23rd August, by the *Oonah* for Tasmania, where a week was spent. On 30th August he set sail on the *Maitai* for New Zealand. This was the most painful experience of his tour. So weak had he become through continuous sickness that on arrival at the Bluff he was carried ashore on a stretcher and his engagement for that evening was cancelled. This was the only meeting he was forced to miss during the tour, for on the following day, much to the astonishment of his doctor and the C.E.M.S. friends, he journeyed to Dunedin, and there commenced his mission in New Zealand.

Travelling chiefly by motor and visiting the various centres of population in the South Island, Christchurch was reached on 8th September, and the next day he crossed to Wellington in the North Island, where again the principal centres of population were visited. On 25th September he arrived in Auckland, and two days later sailed on

the *Marama* for Vancouver. As a result of the visit to New Zealand the C.E.M.S. decided to appoint a travelling secretary for the Dominion.

Before embarking on his mission Watts-Ditchfield had written to the Rev. H. S. Woollcombe, who had visited the Dominions three years before as C.E.M.S. missionary, to receive his impressions as to the position of the C.E.M.S. in Australia. Among other things Woollcombe wrote on 16th March 1912: 'Press for the completion of local organizations and the appointment of provincial secretaries—salaried—to give their *whole* time to the work. You will have done a grand and great work if you get five appointed as a result of your visit.' Already four had been decided upon, one for each of the four provinces in Western Australia, New South Wales, Victoria, and New Zealand, so that the organization was nearly complete, and upon the spiritual effect the following extracts speak. The Bishop of Auckland, in a letter dated 11th January 1913, writes thus:—'You have left behind you memories of love and gratitude which will not lightly fail in Auckland, and I only hope you are meditating as to how long it is before you can come again.'

The General Secretary for New Zealand, writing on 12th September, says:

'I thank you with all my heart on behalf of the C.E.M.S. in New Zealand for your goodness in coming over to help us, and in undertaking so strenuous an itinerary, and I offer heartfelt thanksgiving to God for the showers of blessing He has poured out wherever you have been in our land.'

The Secretary of the C.E.M.S. in Wellington writes on 20th September :

‘ May I add how deeply grateful I am to God and to you for your message to us in Wellington. It has put fresh heart into us all in the unceasing fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil within us and around us. Your address in the Town Hall and your sermon on “ Found Wanting ” will be long remembered.’

On 16th July 1912, the Rev. E. Gordon Savile, Clerical Secretary of the C.E.M.S. in England, wrote thus :

‘ We are beginning to receive accounts of your mission, and we thank God for the way in which your work has been blessed. It is splendid to be told that you have so won the affections of those who were before entire strangers that they have given you this soubriquet of “ Our Vicar ” ! This is a delightful touch, and shows that the best hopes of the mission are being fulfilled. *Laus Deo.*’

Again, on 8th November 1912, Mr. Savile writes :

‘ The whole of the Men’s Society is indebted to you for the wonderful and strenuous work that you have put in during the last six months. We have had wonderful and most encouraging accounts from Australia and New Zealand, and we thank God for the work you have been able to accomplish.’

On 8th October the *Marama* called at Honolulu and Watts-Ditchfield preached in the cathedral.

Whilst taking part in a cricket match on board, the ball struck him on the eye and nose with considerable force. Watts-Ditchfield was wearing

his glasses at the time, and the rim was knocked into the flesh, but the glass dropped unbroken on the deck. The eye was damaged and required careful attention during the remainder of his journeyings. He wrote in his diary :

‘ I did thank God and praise Him as the doctor attended me. Surely His hand has been over me for good, and He has protected me. I went to bed and lay still, thinking of all His love. Prayer has been answered. The motto is true : “ The Lord is with me whithersoever I go, and I will trust and not be afraid.” ’

During the whole of the voyage his thoughts and prayers were concentrated on the work that lay before him on his return to England. His diary reads : ‘ I cannot tell what God has in store for me. . . . He has blessed me more than I deserve.’

The boat arrived in Vancouver on 16th October, and there his work in Canada began immediately. Owing to much pain and discomfort an eye specialist was consulted. His report said that the injury was grave, but that with care there should be no permanent damage. It was necessary to have the eye bandaged, but in spite of this Watts-Ditchfield cheerfully fulfilled his engagements in Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Hamilton, Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa, and Quebec, as well as in New York and Boston.

During this part of the tour, his longing for home became more intense. ‘ Only a month to-day to dear old St. James-the-Less,’ he writes. ‘ God bless us there. My heart is very full. *God bless my home.*’

Of his visit to Niagara he writes : ' Seen Niagara. Need I write more ? ' . . . ' I never can forget this day. How marvellous are Thy works, O Lord.'

The same spiritual blessings attended his work here as in Australia and New Zealand. On 11th September 1913, the Rector of St. Matthew's, Winnipeg, wrote to Watts-Ditchfield, pressing him to go out and open the new church there. He says : ' Our people remember the great blessing you brought us last year, and they simply will not hear of any one else if there is a chance of securing you.'

On 15th November, Watts-Ditchfield sailed from Quebec in the *Empress of Britain* and, after a pleasant voyage across the Atlantic, arrived in Liverpool a week later. The special train did not reach Euston till after eleven o'clock in the evening, but a large gathering—including the Mayor of Bethnal Green—was present to welcome him. On his arrival at St. James-the-Less the road was thronged with people to greet their beloved vicar after his eight months' absence, during which he had travelled 35,000 miles and delivered 470 addresses.

In his letter to the *Men's Magazine* of January 1913, he writes :

' One cannot help but realize how marvellously prayer has been answered, for throughout the whole of the tour my health and voice have never failed me.

' I cannot close without recognizing the great kindness and unbounded hospitality shown to me everywhere. In fact, one's welcome at times has been overpowering,

and I have returned filled with feelings of gratitude towards the many new friends I made across the seas. I have realized, as never before, the wonderful blessings which follow British rule, the marvellous loyalty to the King, and the real significance of the word "home" as applied to the Old Country. But, above all, I have been impressed by the great opportunity which the Church of England possesses in making the Red Route a road along which she will send, not merely clergy, but men of all professions and trades to be ambassadors for the Christ.'

CHAPTER VIII

CALLED TO BE BISHOP OF CHELMSFORD

*' Tuesday, 27th January.—*What a day ! How different my life's future seemed in the evening to what it did when I began the morning's work. I was exceedingly busy all the morning—Workers' Meeting—interviews and letters. I had just had lunch when Emily brought me a letter with " From the Prime Minister " on it. I instinctively felt that it meant something, so without opening it I went into church and knelt down and prayed. On my knees I opened it, and found it was a brief line asking me, with the King's approval, to go to Chelmsford as the first Bishop. As I knelt and looked at the central window and saw " The Christ on the Cross dying for me " I felt it was His call—but oh ! how humbled and weak I felt, and yet as I looked round the church the memories of what He had done there, the blessings He had given, and the victories won in His Name, all encouraged me so that, although nervous, I went back to the vicarage in faith.'

Thus Watts-Ditchfield placed on record in his diary the event that was to transform his whole life, and which had come to him, in the midst of his activities, with a suddenness that was almost overwhelming.

On Saturday, 24th January 1914, he had held a midnight service in the hall to reclaim the intemperate. On the Sunday he had preached three times in his own church, and on the

Monday he had journeyed to Manchester and addressed a meeting over which the Bishop of Manchester presided. Returning to London by the train leaving Manchester at midnight, he little thought of what the day had in store for him. After receiving the Prime Minister's letter he telephoned to the Bishop of St. Albans, and then proceeded to St. Albans in order to see the Bishop.

'The Bishop of St. Albans, whom I have always respected and admired, received me most kindly. He said he was not altogether surprised. He was most helpful. . . . We went into his little chapel, where he prayed with me and gave me his blessing.

'I then hurried off to Leyton, a very roundabout journey. It was curious that on *this* day my first engagement after the receipt of the news was in my new diocese. The Town Hall was full of men (C.E.M.S. Meeting).'

Some twenty-five of the clergy joined Watts-Ditchfield after the meeting and spoke of the rumours in regard to the appointment of the Bishop of Chelmsford. In spite of the solemnity of the occasion the humour of the situation appealed to him, for they little thought that the man to whom they were speaking was their new bishop. The record of the day in his diary closes in a characteristic manner :

'My feelings are so mixed that I cannot really express them—joy at God's goodness and wonder at His love, notwithstanding all my sin and waywardness—shrinking from the task as its magnitude appears before me. The diocese will have to be organized, the patronage, the large population—now 1,350,000, and growing sixty to seventy thousand annually. Again, I can plainly see

that, in my new position as the only Evangelical in the south, I shall have, whether I like it or not, *to lead*. Who am I, and what is my father's house in Israel that I should do this thing? The only encouragement I have, lies in the fact that it was so impossible from man's point of view that it could only have come about by the act of God. No university career—brought up as a Methodist—not even a resident student of Highbury—yet my life has been shaped by God in this week. It is really wonderful. . . . What hath God wrought! Then when I came to London there was not one single person whom I knew even casually—and my total money in my pocket was 3s. 7d. How marvellous it all is! It is in the faith of Him who has led me hitherto that I go forward. "Not by might nor by power but in His Spirit I go."

"Come, Holy Ghost, *my* soul inspire,
And lighten with celestial fire."

Here am I, Lord; what wouldst Thou have me to do? Show me, Lord, and I will be ever only all for Thee.'

On Wednesday morning, 28th January, Watts-Ditchfield went to see the Archbishop of Canterbury. After a most helpful interview, which encouraged Watts-Ditchfield greatly, he writes: 'We went into the chapel, where the archbishop prayed and gave me his blessing.'

The letter of acceptance was then sent to the Prime Minister, and Watts-Ditchfield was again face to face with a gigantic task. The diocese of Chelmsford, with a population of 1,355,156 people, and in which there were 463 benefices, was taken out of that of St. Albans, and comprised the whole of the county of Essex, and parts of the counties of Suffolk and Kent. It covered a vast area and contained many complex and diverse problems. At the

extreme north of the diocese on the east coast lies the naval base at Harwich. Stretching southwards along the coast are such watering-places as Walton-on-the-Naze, Frinton, and Clacton. Farther south is the town of Maldon, and adjacent thereto is Burnham-on-Crouch, the well-known yachting centre. At the south-east corner of the diocese, on the estuary of the Thames, lies Southend-on-Sea, one of the largest watering-places in England. In close proximity to Southend is the artillery base at Shoeburyness. On the bank of the Thames are to be found Leigh-on-Sea, South Benfleet, Canvey Island, Grays, the great docks at Tilbury, and the maze of docks such as the East India and Royal Albert. Behind these is the vast population of London-over-the-Border, which is the title given to that portion of London stretching in an easterly direction from Stratford. In the centre of Essex was the county town, now the city, of Chelmsford, with the ancient garrison town of Colchester, some thirty miles distant therefrom. There were also the numerous rural parishes clustering round the more important country towns such as Halstead, Harlow, and Saffron Walden. The problems of each group of parishes seemed so remote from those of its neighbours that anything like cohesion seemed well-nigh impossible. Then standing out as a challenge to the courage, faith, and daring of any man who attempted to grapple with it, was the tremendous problem of East London in Essex. The knowledge that there was more of the East End in the new diocese of Chelmsford than in the

old diocese of London may have weighed heavily in the judgment of the Prime Minister when making the appointment.

To weld these various districts and parishes into a homogeneous unit, to inculcate and foster a corporate spirit in the lives of congregations of such widely different pursuits and occupations, to inspire with one ideal men of such vastly different temperaments, to bring into being the organization and machinery essential for this purpose, and to raise and administer the funds necessary for the maintenance and extension of such administrative machinery, was only a portion of the work which devolved upon the newly appointed bishop.

With characteristic thoughtfulness for the feelings of others, Watts-Ditchfield wrote on 29th January to the suffragan bishops of Barking and Colchester. The following extracts from his letter to the Bishop of Barking suggest the spirit that was to dominate his relationship with his two episcopal colleagues :

‘ I am writing to you in strict confidence in order that the first intimation of my coming to Chelmsford may reach you from myself. . . . It is with a realization of my own weakness that I accept the offer of a post involving as it does such immense possibilities as Chelmsford. It will involve a wide outlook, a vision for the future and tolerant and yet sound churchmanship, but above all the new diocese must commence its life in entire dependence on the Holy Spirit.

‘ I feel great hesitation in coming when I think of the work which you and the Bishop of Colchester have done. It appears almost like presumption on my part to appear now on the scene, and yet I feel it a duty to God

and the Church to respond to the call so unexpectedly made. My burden is lessened by the thought that I shall have you by my side with your ripe experience and wide knowledge of the diocese. I know what you have been to the Bishop of St. Albans, and I shall need your help far more than he did, and I know that when the need arises I shall be able to count upon your sympathy, help, and loyalty. I earnestly ask for your prayers, and I trust that by God's blessing, we may have a long, happy, and blessed service together for God in the Vineyard which He has placed under our care.'

The replies received from each, assuring him of their ready and loyal co-operation in all that concerned the welfare of the diocese, were a great encouragement to Watts-Ditchfield. The loyalty and devotion of each never failed in life, and the association thus begun ripened into an affectionate friendship which contributed largely to the good feeling that prevailed in the diocese.

Amid the many names suggested for the responsible and difficult task of Bishop of Chelmsford, it was significant that the name of Watts-Ditchfield had never been mentioned. And yet when the formal announcement was made, the appointment met with universal approval, as was illustrated by the full reports given in all the leading English papers, and in those of the Dominions overseas, where Watts-Ditchfield had rendered such eminent service to the Church as C.E.M.S. missionary. Surely the Hand of God can be seen, guiding and preparing His servant for the work that He had prepared for him to do. The C.E.M.S. tour had been of great benefit to his physical

health, and he returned to England more robust than at any period of his life. Taking him out of a strenuous life of ceaseless activity in the one parish in East London, and removing him from the scene of his wider activities in the Church at home, it had given him time and opportunity to review his life's work, and had enabled him to formulate plans and to establish ideals for his future life and ministry. The close touch with men of all schools of thought and shades of opinion had broadened his outlook on things religious and secular. The delivery of the Lectures in Pastoral Theology in the University of Cambridge, and their publication in volume form, had given men a more accurate impression of the greatness of the man in his breadth of vision and in his attention to practical detail.

The *Times* of 6th February 1914 makes the following comments on the appointment :

'The appointments announced on page 6 to the new bishoprics of Sheffield, Chelmsford, and St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich, perhaps scarcely coincide with general anticipations. Yet Mr. Asquith's extreme care in his nominations to high office in the Church is well known, and it will be recognized that he has had in view the special work which lies before the new bishops. The organization of new dioceses requires men of varied experience in the ministry of the Church of England, with wide sympathy with the different elements which find a place within its borders. Each of the new bishops has these qualifications in a quite special degree.'

'The appointment of the Rev. J. E. Watts-Ditchfield, Vicar of St. James-the-Less, Bethnal Green, to the Bishopric of Essex will occasion special interest.' . . .

‘Two years ago the Church of England Men’s Society appointed him its special delegate to Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand, and in every place he visited in his tour he made a profound impression. He was select preacher at Cambridge in 1909 and 1913, and was appointed lecturer in Pastoral Theology at the University, 1912-1913. The lectures he delivered are generally considered among the most noteworthy of the series.’ . . . ‘He is the author of some volumes of sermons and addresses which have had a large circulation, and has for some years taken a leading place among the Evangelicals in the Church of England. As a member of the Upper House of Convocation of Canterbury, he will be able to represent them in an assembly where for some time they have had but little apparent influence. The huge population in London-over-the-Border, which will be under his charge, will, we are sure, soon realize the force of his energetic and earnest personality.’

The following extract from an article in the *Morning Post* of 7th February 1914 is of interest :

‘Chelmsford has as its first bishop one who has, as a parish priest, been conspicuously before the public as a man’s man.’ . . . ‘Perhaps the diocese to which he has been appointed provides the most difficult problem of any to be faced by this triple creation of bishoprics. There is infinite opportunity for trouble for the bishop who is a strong party man in every diocese, but especially is this the case here ; there is also a splendid chance for consolidating and fostering Church life if the situation is wisely and discreetly handled.’

The following extract from the *Church Times* of 6th February 1914 is also of interest :

‘The Rev. John Edwin Watts-Ditchfield is well known in London as a hard-working East End priest of

strong Evangelical convictions, and is regarded as a leader by the younger clergy of that school which latterly has shown signs of impatience with the rigid traditions and dry Protestantism of the older men.' . . . 'He recently undertook an extended tour in Australia.' . . . 'It is possible that his experiences on that journey widened his conceptions of churchmanship to a considerable degree, and those who know him best decline to believe that as a diocesan bishop he will fail to perceive that there are equally loyal churchmen in the ranks of those with whose principles of churchmanship he is not in full sympathy.'

The tone and substance of the press comments, together with the congratulatory letters and telegrams which literally poured in from all sources, and the letters of welcome from the diocese itself, were a testimony to the esteem in which Watts-Ditchfield was held by his fellow-men, and also to the value placed by them on the yeoman service that he had rendered to the Church of his day. They were also an encouragement to him to go forward with renewed courage and faith to the wider sphere of work that lay before him.

Watts-Ditchfield's first message to the diocese was given through the Mayor of Chelmsford on 6th February, and reads thus :

'I feel very greatly the responsibility which God has placed upon me in being the first Bishop of Chelmsford, and the more so as I have to follow a man so wide in statesmanship and so spiritual in character as the beloved Bishop of St. Albans.

'The Church must go forth proclaiming the one message of the Christ which alone is the hope of the world, and must seek by unitedly working on tolerant

and yet sound Church lines, to become a great aggressive society making itself felt in every part of the diocese.

‘ I appeal earnestly for prayer that a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit may be given to clergy and laity alike, and that I myself may be entirely devoted to the service of the Divine Lord, and of His Church on earth.’

As the Consecration of the two newly appointed bishops in the southern province was arranged to take place in St. Paul’s Cathedral on St. Matthias’ Day, 24th February 1914, it gave little time for preparation. Among other things it was essential that the diocese should be worthily represented on such an historic occasion. With that close attention to detail which marked the man’s activity throughout life, Watts-Ditchfield was careful to see that this was done. As the number of tickets issued by the Cathedral authorities was strictly limited, Watts-Ditchfield wrote his first letter to the clergy of the diocese, a copy of which was sent to each, expressing the hope that they might be present in St. Paul’s, and explaining the provision made for their accommodation. He asked for intercessions in each church at the celebration of the Holy Communion on that morning, and for an intercessory service, where possible, at the same hour as the Consecration. He used the opportunity afforded by this letter to place before his clergy his plan of action for the future. Dated 18th February 1914, the letter reads :

‘ MY DEAR BROTHER,—As you already know, I have been called of God to be the first Bishop of Chelmsford. I realize the greatness of the task entrusted to my care, but I shall come among you believing that He who has

called me will give me the grace which I shall need. . . My one desire is to serve Him who has called me, by serving you. My experience of parochial life will help me to realize your difficulties, and I trust that, as time goes on, I may, by God's blessing, be a help to you. I especially want to know my brethren working nobly and quietly in the country districts.

'In order that I may the better do this, I am asking you to spare me, during the first year, from invitations to ordinary parochial functions. The administrative work of a new diocese will be very considerable, and the Bishops of Barking and Colchester have kindly consented to take, this year, almost all the Confirmations. I, myself, hope to be able, during the year, to visit every rural deanery, as such, and to hold, if possible, a Quiet Day for the clergy, with either a special service in a central church at night, or perhaps, in the larger towns a mass meeting. But my chief desire is to meet privately every clergyman in the diocese, and so, after each Quiet Day, I hope to arrange, that on the succeeding days, I may see each of the clergy of the deanery, when I trust he may tell me of his work, and its difficulties and encouragements.'

During the week preceding the Consecration, the Archbishop of Canterbury conferred on Watts-Ditchfield the Lambeth degree of D.D. He was presented to the Primate by the Dean of Canterbury.

On Saturday, 21st February, he went to St. Leonards, and spent the week-end alone, in quiet preparation for the solemn service of Tuesday. He returned to Bethnal Green during the afternoon of Monday, 23rd February, and in the evening a service of intercession was held in St. James-

the-Less. He was greatly cheered by the fact that the Bishop of Stepney (Dr. Paget) came quite unexpectedly to the service. It was characteristic of his attitude towards Watts-Ditchfield, who repeatedly spoke of the great encouragement he had always received from the manly courtesy and thoughtful kindness of the Bishop of Stepney. A little personal note in Watts-Ditchfield's diary is almost prophetic: 'I wish he had been appointed a diocesan.'

There was a quiet gathering in the vicarage dining-room of eight past and five present curates. Six of the past curates were unable to be present. The Rev. F. W. Baldwin, as his first curate, presented him with his episcopal ring, which was given by the whole of his staff, past and present.

'It touched me greatly. I have indeed to thank God for my colleagues' love and devotion from the first day until now,' is the comment in his diary.

Previous to this 'the Brothers' had presented Watts-Ditchfield with his episcopal robes.

The memorable day arrived, and the first entry in his diary for that day is significant of the realization of what he owed to his early training:

'*St. Matthias' Day*.—How my father and mother would have rejoiced! I sent a wreath to be laid on their grave.'

It was the privilege of Watts-Ditchfield to nominate the preacher at the Consecration, and his nomination of the Rev. J. Gough M'Cormick was fully justified in the eloquent and inspiring sermon preached from the text, 'Thou shalt be called by

a new name.' At the conclusion of the sermon, the Bishop-elect of Chelmsford, vested with his rochet, was presented to the Archbishop of Canterbury by the Bishops of London and St. Albans. The impression made upon Watts-Ditchfield by this solemn and dignified service, culminating in the act of Consecration, is best described in the words of his diary written on the same day :

' It is impossible for me to put on paper what I felt throughout the service. The climax was reached when the whole of the bishops formed the circle around me, and I felt their hands upon me and received my commission. It was a moment when I felt the *touch of God*. I received then and there my commission from God, and although the bishops were the human channel through which the commission came, it was simply God speaking to my heart and conscience, and I felt that the Lord was calling, and I could simply and humbly say, "Here am I, Lord." As I returned to the little prayer-desk and knelt, thoughts crowded in upon me of my dear father and mother, my boyhood days, my conversion, failures, blessings, all in a moment. It was wonderful and yet, amid it all, God was predominant in my thoughts. I prayed for my new diocese, and surrendered all I am and have to be used by God. I prayed that I might be a real Father in God, and that I might be a soul-winning bishop, and lead the clergy to be more so day by day. Then the rest and refreshment of the Holy Communion. How wonderful it all was ! That is a hallowed spot to me—ordained deacon there, priest, and now consecrated bishop—all on the same flag.'

Later in the evening the bishop wrote the concluding entry for that solemn day in his life :

‘What a day it has been—a new name given to me, but it means a new life. I mean by God’s help to be a Father in God, not a prelate. I do not want to take so many engagements that I have no time for the personal intercourse with clergy. That would be fatal. I want day by day to bring the diocese before God, and above all to win souls to God.

A bishop ought to be the *biggest soul winner in his diocese*. If we are the successors of the Apostles, then their spiritual fruit should be ours, and I am going to pray that it may be mine. So I pray this night for grace and help. My cry is: In God do I put my trust. Lord, take me and use me as Thou wilt.’

On Thursday morning, 26th February, at Buckingham Palace, the bishop was introduced into His Majesty’s presence by the Home Secretary, and did homage upon his appointment.

The bishop had now to attempt what many people would have regarded as an impossible task. He must carry on much of the work at St. James-the-Less and at the same time take charge of the diocese of Chelmsford. It was a tremendous undertaking, but an inevitable one.

The task of preparing and interviewing candidates, particularly the men, for Confirmation was so dear to his heart that he could not forgo the privilege for the last time. The result must be almost unique in the history of the Church, for, by the courtesy of the Bishop of London, it was his sacred privilege on Sunday, 29th March, to confirm the candidates whom he had prepared.

There were many matters requiring immediate attention in the diocese, and to these the bishop gave his attention. The formal and legal acts

which had been awaiting his Consecration were dealt with, his 'Honorary and Examining Chaplains' appointed, and many clergy interviewed on matters of urgency. The matter of the episcopal residence required careful thought. As a result of much painstaking care, and after several visits to Chelmsford, it was decided to purchase 'Red-gates,' which was situated on the Colchester Road, in the parish of Springfield. This proved an ideal residence. Unfortunately it was impossible to take up residence before the end of October.

His first public appearance in the diocese was made at Colchester on Sunday, 8th March 1914, and this fact, to a certain extent, compensated the ancient town for the disappointment experienced when, by the votes of Essex church-people, Chelmsford was preferred as the cathedral city of the diocese. The bishop was the guest of the Bishop of Colchester during his week-end in Colchester.

Celebrating at St. Nicholas at 8 A.M., where a corporate Communion of the C.E.M.S. was held, the bishop preached at 11 A.M. to an overflowing congregation in St. Mary-at-the-Walls where Canon Brunwin-Hales, one of his honorary chaplains, was rector. The Mayor and Corporation of Colchester attended the service in state. Taking as his first text in the diocese, 'I am among you as he that serveth,' the bishop went on to speak of the part the Church must play in striving to bring peace and goodwill into the national life. Referring to the presence of the Mayor and Corporation, the bishop proceeded :

‘ I welcome you this morning, and I should like to say that I trust that in this diocese of Chelmsford the Church and State may work hand-in-hand for the betterment of this county. We each have our proper functions, and we each in our proper place have our solemn duties and our great responsibilities. You have in your corporate capacity to carry out and administer the laws that are made. We, on our side, have to lay down the principles upon which those laws are framed. Although we do not formulate politics—that we leave to the State—our province is to teach. It is a happy augury for this diocese that, on my first visit to this town as the first Bishop of Chelmsford, I should meet the Mayor and Corporation in public worship to ask the blessing of God on this diocese which has just been created. I understand that some of you are not usually attached to the Church of which I am bishop. I welcome you here, and I will do all I possibly can to promote that Christian unity which is so essential to the true welfare of Christianity in this land. Therefore, I trust to be a friend of all, and the enemy of none. I come to devote my life to the service of God, and of this diocese.’

In the afternoon the bishop held his first Confirmation at St. Peter’s, and in the early evening visited and addressed the Scouts’ Own of the 1st Colchester Troop. At Evensong the bishop preached to a large congregation in St. Botolph’s.

On the Monday the bishop journeyed to London to attend an important meeting of the Diocesan Board of Finance for the counties of Herts and Essex, at which it was decided to take steps to have a separate Board of Finance for each diocese. In the afternoon the bishop attended a meeting of the Bishopric Committee, and then returned to Col-

chester, where a great gathering of Church people, presided over by the Bishop of Colchester, who was supported by the mayor and the rural dean, was held in the Moot Hall, to welcome him to that portion of the diocese. The bishop was grateful for the warmth and enthusiasm of the welcome thus extended to him.

After a strenuous week, in which a visit was paid to Bishops' College, Cheshunt, the bishop preached on the following Sunday morning at West Ham Parish Church, where Canon Pelly, the second of his honorary chaplains, was vicar. Preceding the service, the Mayor and Corporation and the Nonconformist ministers welcomed him to West Ham. On Saturday, 21st March, the bishop visited his birthplace, an event of the greatest significance to him. It was characteristic of the bishop that he should wish, at the earliest possible moment, to visit the spot that was hallowed by so many memories of his earlier years. His first act on arriving there is recorded in his diary: 'Visited the grave of my dear father and mother. What I owe to their prayers! I can hear my father saying in his family prayer, "God bless John Edwin."' The bishop was touched by the greetings he received from so many of his boyhood friends. 'Eh, lad, but it does me good to see thee,' was the greeting from one whom he met casually in the street. On the Sunday morning the bishop celebrated at eight in Patricroft Parish Church, and at eleven preached in St. Andrew's, Eccles, at the foundation-stone laying of which he had been present as a boy. In

the afternoon the Town Hall at Eccles was crowded to the doors with men, over whom the mayor presided. It was necessary to hold an overflow meeting in the Co-operative Hall. In the evening Patricroft Church was filled to its utmost capacity long ere the service began, so that an overflow service was held in the school, which was likewise crowded. Thus his birthplace did honour to one whom it claimed as 'our' bishop. On the Monday the bishop visited the school where he had been educated and where he had served as pupil teacher, and there gave an address to the children.

On Sunday, 29th March, after preaching at Chingford in the morning, the bishop held the Confirmation in St. James-the-Less. The comment in his diary is: 'God was very near. His Presence was felt. As candidate after candidate knelt before me, I did feel the responsibility. They were my children indeed. God bless them every one.'

A journey to Southend-on-Sea on Saturday, 4th April, enabled the bishop to visit each church in the borough, and thus to learn the problems of Church extension which confronted this rapidly-growing borough. On the Sunday morning the bishop celebrated at eight o'clock, and at eleven o'clock preached in the Church of St. John the Baptist, Southend. This being the first Sunday after the constitution of the county borough, the Mayor and Corporation attended in state, together with the principal borough officials.

Conducting the 'Three Hours' devotional service

at Ilford on Good Friday morning, the remainder of that day and the whole of Easter Day were spent in Bethnal Green.

On Thursday evening, 16th April, there was a meeting of the congregation to take farewell of the vicar, when the great hall was crowded in every part.

To an outsider it would have appeared a remarkable gathering, and one that suggested the comprehensiveness of the Church of England. Men and women, young and old, were there; people from the poorest parts of the parish, and those more intimately associated with the Church, were seated side by side. It was a great family party united in a common desire to pay their tribute of loyal and affectionate gratitude to the vicar, and to wish him Godspeed in the important task that he had undertaken. The churchwarden presided and, after several speeches, read the text of the farewell address which had been inscribed in an album containing the signatures of the hundreds of subscribers. He then asked the bishop to accept a handsome mahogany roll-top desk, a library table, and a study chair, all of which had been made in Bethnal Green by the members of the Men's Service. To Mrs. Watts-Ditchfield was presented a silver tea service; and to Miss Dorothy Watts-Ditchfield a beautiful inlaid cabinet, also of Bethnal Green workmanship. It was beyond human power for a man to sit on that platform and to look upon that vast audience, to hear the tributes of affection and gratitude from lay representatives of the organizations which he

had founded in the parish, to realize the sacrifice involved for so many in the valuable presentations made to him and to his loved ones, and to remain unmoved. For once, the bishop was unequal to the occasion, and made no attempt to make a formal speech. In a few homely words, spoken with deep emotion, he thanked them all for their love, loyalty, and devotion, and bade them give of their best to his successor.

The vast gathering then rose in a silence that was significant of intense feeling which some were unable to restrain, whilst the bishop prayed and gave them his blessing.

Any attempt to depict the scenes of Sunday, 19th April, or to describe the feelings of vicar and people on that sacred day, must end in failure. Celebrating in the early morning, the bishop preached at eleven o'clock on 'The Book of Remembrance.'

Preparatory to the Men's Service, he headed the procession of the band round the streets. Realizing that this was the last occasion on which he would do this as their vicar, people crowded to their doors in friendly greeting. The Men's Service that followed was such as will be remembered for a very long time by those who took part in it.

The church was so crowded in the evening that an overflow service was held in the great hall of the buildings. Taking as his text, 'Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward,' the bishop bade them face the future with confidence, believing that the God who had blessed them

hitherto would still be with them to bless and prosper all their efforts for the extension of His Kingdom. In concluding his sermon the bishop said :

‘ When Bishop Creighton sent me here, I wondered why ; I wonder no more. I lay my ministry down with all its faults and failures, but you and this church will be in my thoughts to my dying day. And I tell you, as my last word, that Jesus Christ is everything to me, my faith in Him is the one thing in all the world that can keep and sustain me. I want my Saviour to be yours.’

‘ So ends the second chapter of my ministerial life, St. Peter’s, St. James-the-Less. May God forgive the failures ! May God be glorified for all that He has done ! ’ is the entry in his diary.

Chelmsford was *en fête* on St. George’s Day, for was not their new bishop to be enthroned in his cathedral on that day ? Quite early in the day clergy and county people began to arrive from all parts. The afternoon was regarded as a holiday, and many places of business were temporarily closed. The children of the elementary schools were given a half-holiday. The flags and bunting displayed in the streets, and the joyous pealing of the bells in the cathedral tower, bespoke great public rejoicing. The Mayor and Corporation had done all in their power to emphasize the importance of the day, and every provision had been made so that the proceedings could be carried out with dignity and reverence. Canon Lake, the precentor, and the cathedral staff had laboured untiringly so that the arrangements of the day might accord with its joyful significance.

The result of the co-operative efforts of these two representative bodies was that the whole proceedings were carried to a successful issue without one discordant note, and in such an orderly manner that an outsider would scarcely realize the immensity of the task undertaken.

Those representing the various county interests, together with the churchwardens and lay workers from the various parts of the diocese, were in their places before the first of the processions, in which were the mayors and town clerks in the county and of Bethnal Green, followed by the Corporation and Mayor of Chelmsford, entered the cathedral. This was followed by an imposing procession of four hundred and fifty robed clergy. Punctually at the time appointed, the bishop, preceded by the apparitor-general, the registrar, and the chancellor of the diocese, his domestic chaplain bearing the pastoral staff, and followed by his honorary and examining chaplains, sought for admission to the cathedral.

The Archdeacon of Canterbury having placed the bishop on his throne, the archdeacons and clergy then paid homage to their bishop. Choosing as his text, 'Righteousness exalteth a nation,' the bishop rapidly sketched the place occupied by the Hebrew nation at the time of Solomon. Proceeding, the bishop said :

'To-day is in many respects a similar occasion. The formation of a new diocese has been for a long time in the minds of God's people. To-day we realize the fulfilment of the hopes of many days, and in our rejoicing and thanksgiving to Almighty God our thoughts go out

to the Bishop of St. Albans, to whose wisdom, faith, and unceasing activity we all owe so much. We welcome here the heads of the tribes in the persons of peers and members of Parliament: the chief of the fathers in the mayors of every borough in the county. The priests have gathered from town and country, and are mingled with this congregation, so representative of every phase of our Christian, political, industrial, and social life. Judges, magistrates, justices of the peace, representatives of His Majesty's naval and military forces, and of the police, are here to-day.

‘There are great social problems begotten of town life, and here the Church must step in and do what the law is powerless to do. She must quicken the moral pulse of the nation. She must raise the tone of the whole community. She must teach men the true meaning of Brotherhood by the proclamation of the Fatherhood of God. She must teach the dignity of man and his inestimable value by teaching the reality of the Incarnation. She must ever hold up the Cross as at once the great revealer of sin and of the love of God to man. She must not draw up programmes or formulate policies, but she must rebuke sin, and proclaim the Gospel as the power of God unto salvation.’ . . .

‘The cathedral must become the centre of Church life in the diocese, which, whether in town or country, must know no party politics. Such must never be proclaimed from her pulpit; but she must use every opportunity to emphasize the fact that the Gospel of the Christ demands that every part of the nation's life must be founded upon and governed by righteousness. What a task lies before the municipal authorities of that great London-over-the-Border! Is there to be permitted to grow up another slum area like that known in East and South London? The matter largely depends upon the

vision, the wisdom, and fidelity of the local authorities concerned.

‘ Again, the same principle affects our watering-places, such as the new county borough of Southend. We thank God for the increased facilities by which people in the crowded city can reach the sea ; but are these health resorts to be allowed to become moral cesspools—places where God and His day are utterly disregarded ? The Church must proclaim, in season and out of season, that righteousness alone exalteth a nation, and whether in greater London, at the seaside, or in country village, the authorities will do well to hearken and to act accordingly.

‘ The greatest incentive to victory is the righteousness of the cause. . . . The country parts of the diocese must have their message from this centre of the Church. They must learn to pray and to trust God in rain and drought. The village parsonage has produced many a man other than Nelson who has taught men the meaning of duty and service. In his arduous work for God on the country-side, amid the scattered hamlets, the village priest may be assured that the diocese as a whole will ever give to him and his work her sympathy and her prayer. . . .

‘ Although we rejoice in the Church’s cleansing at the Reformation and her return to primitive faith and practice, we realize with thankfulness her unbroken connexion with the earliest dawn of Christianity in this land, even before the days of Cedd, the saint of our county. We are proud of our inheritance, as members of the Church of England ; we value her threefold Orders, her Creeds, and her Articles ; we maintain the faith once delivered to the Saints which she proclaims therein ; we realize the supreme position which the Holy Scriptures hold in her teaching ; we recognize the place which the two Sacraments occupy in the life of her children ; we rejoice in her history, and we thank God for her share in moulding

the character of the laity. We praise God for her Saints—for their learning, for their piety, for their lives ; and here to-day we rejoice to think that, with all her many faults, the Church of England is to-day the greatest force making for righteousness in the whole world.

‘ May I be permitted to add one personal note ? I stand here to-day as your bishop, and as one who needs your sympathy and your prayers. The task which lies before me is no light one, and I realize my own weakness as I never did before ; but I also realize that He who has called me will go with me as I go in and out among you. I come with a real desire to be a Father in God in this diocese. I want to be your servant in Christ Jesus. I say quite frankly that I have my strong convictions, but I have learned to know that men look at truth from many sides, and it will be my constant desire to recognize every variation of use and of work, so long as it is loyal to the doctrine and to the spirit of the Prayer Book. I want this diocese to be won for Christ.

‘ I held one curacy, one vicariate, and now I am opening what I believe to be the last chapter of my life. It is a solemn moment to me. In the order of God’s Providence, I shall live and die among you. I have, by God’s help, to lay the foundation of this diocese. You can help or hinder me in that work. I am certain, from the kindness I have already received, that you, both clergy and laity alike, will rally to my help. You will not expect me to be perfect, or to be entirely free from mistakes. I have come honestly desiring to do God’s will, and to try to build up and strengthen God’s Church. I appeal to you to join me in prayer, in service, and in sacrifice, that Essex may be won for her Divine Lord.’

The pronouncement of the Blessing by the bishop for the first time in his cathedral brought an historic service to a close. As the procession

of clergy, with their bishop in the rear, followed by the civic representatives, wended its way round the square outside the Shire Hall, the bishop saw the vast concourse of people who had been unable to attend the service, and was inspired to perform one of those impromptu actions of kindly thoughtfulness which endeared him to the hearts of his people. Mounting the cannon outside the Shire Hall, he raised his hand, the procession halted, and all eyes were turned upon their bishop, who spoke in a firm and clear voice :

‘ I should just like to express my own personal thanks to you all for your kindness to me. This is a very solemn day to me personally, and your kindness has helped me considerably. I come among you as a stranger, but by God’s help I will be a friend to every one in this county, and I can assure you, as far as I can, that I shall simply live and die for the good of this county of Essex. The one aim we must all have before us as we commence our work together is “ Essex for Christ.” I wanted to say just that one word to you, to assure you of my deep thankfulness to God for the blessings of this day.’

The bishop then said, ‘ Let us pray.’ Every hat was removed, and all bowed their heads in an impressive silence that will not easily be forgotten, whilst the bishop offered this simple, yet earnest, extempore prayer :

‘ O God, bless this town, every man, every woman, every child within it ; make us all better, purer, stronger, and braver for the right ; and make Essex a county belonging to God, where the men may lead happy and pure lives by His help. Hear us, O Lord, for Christ our Saviour’s sake.’

Taking his pastoral staff in his hand, the bishop then pronounced the Blessing. The procession went on its way, and the people dispersed to their homes with the feeling that they, too, had had a share in this wonderful day, and grateful to the bishop who, by his loving thought, had made this possible.

Robed in his doctor's gown, the bishop proceeded to the Corn Exchange, where a reception was held by the Mayor and Mayoress of Chelmsford.

On the steps of the building the mayor presented an address, illuminated on vellum, to the bishop, welcoming him and wishing him 'every blessing in the discharge of the onerous duties to which you have been called.' The bishop then thanked the mayor for the kindly welcome and good wishes, cheers were given, in response to the mayor's appeal, for the bishop and Mrs. Watts-Ditchfield, and for the mayor of the borough and the visiting mayors, in response to the bishop's call; and the bishop and the mayor entered the Corn Exchange, where refreshments were served. Subsequently there were speeches of welcome by Lord Rayleigh, O.M., representing the Lord Lieutenant, on behalf of the county, and by the Mayor of Chelmsford on behalf of the borough. The bishop, in replying, thanked those responsible for the arrangements, which had been so excellently planned and carried out, and again assured them of his desire to serve the county.

A service was held in the cathedral in the evening, at which the bishop preached. A solemn

Te Deum of thanksgiving was sung at the close of the service.

His thoughtfulness for others throughout what must have been for him a trying day, made its appeal to the people. The following telegram was sent by the bishop to the Bishop of St. Albans :

‘ The thoughts of the whole diocese will be centred on you to-day. We shall thank God for the noble and lasting work which you have done, and your name will be ever held in honour and with sincere affection by all in the diocese of Chelmsford, and our prayers will ascend that God may richly bless you in heart and life.’

At the close of the evening service the bishop thanked the choir for their services, and, as he left the Shire Hall, he also thanked the police for their part in the day’s proceedings. As a result of these human touches, it seemed as if there had already begun what the *Essex County Chronicle* of 25th April described as the Second Enthronement. The article reads :

‘ But there is a greater proceeding in connexion with the new diocese which, in the view of many, will begin at the conclusion of the outward and visible enthronement of his Lordship. That is the enthronement of the bishop in the hearts of the people. By those best able to judge and who know the new bishop best, this second enthronement, so to speak, is as assured as that which took place yesterday within the walls of the cathedral. Perhaps the appointment of no previous bishop to any diocese has been accompanied with quite so much enthusiasm, and quite so many hopes for its success, as in the present instance.’

On the morning of Friday, 24th April, the bishop

celebrated in his cathedral, and used, for the first time, the golden Communion vessels which had been presented to the cathedral.

In this way, Watts-Ditchfield became the first Bishop of Chelmsford. His diary on the Saturday evening closes thus : ‘ So ends a week never to be forgotten. Farewell to Bethnal Green. Welcome to Chelmsford. I held one curacy, one vicariate, and I shall probably live and die at Chelmsford. Lord, make me faithful.’

CHAPTER IX

EPISCOPAL LIFE

THE bishop was essentially a man of action. He set before himself high ideals, and then manfully strove to live up to them. He had set before himself and his diocese the ideal that he should be, in reality, a Father in God to his clergy. To achieve this it was necessary that the bishop and his clergy should be known to each other. He was convinced that such personal knowledge would create mutual trust and confidence. In order that this might be accomplished, he embarked on the great task of visiting each parish, and thus learning the problems that had to be faced there. He also wished to visit each of the homes of his clergy, so that he might the more effectually pray for them in all that concerned their welfare. Few men would have dared attempt what many thought to be the impossible.

In the early months of his episcopate, the bishop went far to achieve his purpose, and had it not been for the intervention of the War his task would have been accomplished during that first year. What was, in many respects, a serious hindrance to the bishop in his work, imposing upon him a heavy physical strain, proved of assistance in the matter of visitation. Till

November 1914 the bishop was homeless. He could not enter into residence at Bishops court owing to the fact that the occupant could not vacate the house before the end of October. The bishop's furniture was stored, and Mrs. Watts-Ditchfield went to reside at St. Leonards. His headquarters were Ridley House, the University Settlement in Bethnal Green. It was a sight, at once ennobling and pathetic, to see the bishop in the small bedroom that he occupied there, or at work till the early hours of the morning, with his secretary and chaplain, in the tiny sitting-room of the latter, on the few occasions when he was at home after his long itineraries in the diocese. Here his interviews took place, and many remember with gladness the small sitting-room in Bethnal Green where they first saw their bishop.

His homeless condition set him free to visit the country districts and to accept the hospitality of many of his clergy and laity. The visitation commenced in the large and important deanery of West Ham. One of his clergy volunteered to motor him round, and, wherever the bishop went, the same generosity was displayed in the matter of conveyance. The rural deans were extraordinarily kind and thoughtful both in drawing up the programme for his visit and in arranging in every possible way for his comfort and convenience. On 17th May, the first day of the West Ham visitation, the bishop set out at nine o'clock, and visited nine parishes, the Deaf and Dumb Church, the cemetery chaplain, and Canon Bayne, the Secretary of the London-over-the-Border

Fund. Returning to Ridley House at seven o'clock, the bishop set forth almost immediately for the Queen's Hall, where he was to speak at the seventieth anniversary of the Y.M.C.A. On the Tuesday, the bishop conducted a Quiet Day for the clergy of the deanery in West Ham Parish Church. Beginning with a celebration of the Holy Communion at 8.30, four addresses were given during the course of the day. In the evening a meeting of clergy and church workers in North-west Ham was held in the Stratford Town Hall. At the entrance to the hall the bishop received and shook hands with over a thousand church workers. The rural dean welcomed the bishop, who was received in an enthusiastic manner. The address was typical of those given at similar meetings in the various parts of the diocese, and set forth his ideals for church workers. Thanking them warmly for the kind welcome accorded him, the bishop went on to say, among other things :

‘ I come with the one desire to do the Master's will and to be of service to His Church. I am anxious to see this diocese really progressing and growing strong spiritually, and helpful to the community at large. My first desire is that the diocese should be a united one. When the Church is united, it can achieve anything ; when divided, it must fail. But it is well to remember that there is a kind of unity which is almost worse than disunion. We do not want to be like the Church of which it was said : “ They are a very united people ; they are frozen together ! ” We must recognize that, within the limits of the Church of England, there is plenty of room for variety, whilst being strictly loyal to the teaching

of the Book of Common Prayer. I come here with the sincere desire in my heart to be the bishop, as far as God wills, of the whole diocese. In taking this broad outlook, you must see to it that, in the little corner of the diocese where your work lies, the Church is united. I should much like to persuade every one in the diocese to make the resolution that, for a whole year, they would not grumble nor criticize anything. If this were possible, much could be accomplished. My second desire is to turn everything in the Church by the handle of prayer. Prayer increases interest to a wonderful extent. The whole of the Church machinery must be governed and controlled by prayer. A praying diocese will rapidly become a working diocese, a fruitful diocese, and a happy diocese. But one danger to be avoided is that of becoming parochial. Each church must become a missionary church. . . . If the Church is to be spiritually aggressive, then each member must be prepared to give self, time, and work to the cause of God. Each must ask, "What work am I doing for the Church?" My one aim is that every church may become wholly spiritualized.'

On the Wednesday, eleven parishes were visited, which occupied the bishop from nine o'clock in the morning till seven o'clock in the evening. At eight o'clock a meeting of the church workers in South-west Ham was held in the public hall at Canning Town, when the bishop again received and shook hands with over a thousand people. After addressing his enthusiastic audience, the bishop returned to Bethnal Green, where his correspondence awaited him. The same programme was executed in the more populous rural deaneries.

When visiting his clergy, the bishop invariably

offered prayer for them, their loved ones, and the parish, and gave to each his blessing.

In the country parts of the diocese, the programme was more varied. There was always a Quiet Day for the clergy of the deanery, and the bishop was much cheered by the splendid manner in which the clergy attended these. Where it was possible, meetings of church workers were held in a central hall. Many of the clergy entered fully into the bishop's endeavour, and at an hour which must have been inconvenient to the people concerned the bishop would find a congregation assembled in the church of a remote country parish to welcome him, and to receive his message. In other parishes a small band of workers greeted their bishop, whilst in others the churchwardens joined the clergy in extending a welcome. In some, where such methods were impossible, or where the bishop's ideal had not been fully grasped, the incumbent alone met him. Where the visit was made in the afternoon, there would frequently be found a happy family gathering on the vicarage lawn.

Wherever possible, the family assembled, and the bishop offered prayer, and gave them his blessing in the home. Everywhere the bishop went, the hospitality given so generously, and the welcome extended so open-heartedly, was ample proof of the appreciation and gratitude with which the clergy viewed the bishop's endeavour to know them, and to become personally associated with them and their work. There were touches of humour. In one vicarage, where the vicar had

recently married a young wife, the bishop was impressed by his good humour. After a time, the vicar said : ' I must tell you, my lord, that my wife could not understand why you wished to visit us. I told her that one of the reasons was to examine the wives of the clergy in the Church Catechism. My wife has been busily engaged ever since in endeavouring to learn it.' Presently the wife came in, obviously nervous. The bishop greeted her, and then said, ' I understand your husband has informed you of my desire to catechize you.' There was a broad smile on the vicar's face, as he thought the bishop was playing his part in the plan of things. ' Now, I want you to answer me accurately,' proceeded the bishop. ' What time does your husband get up in the morning ? What time does he go out visiting ? ' The bishop got no further, for the wife burst into a merry peal of laughter and the joke was against the vicar.

By means of these visits a feeling of mutual understanding and comradeship was created between bishop and clergy. This feeling was intensified in the homes where the bishop had passed the night. The conception of the thought of such a visitation was an inspiration of genius. The bond of union between bishop and clergy was cemented in such a manner as could not have been accomplished by any other means. Notes were carefully made and preserved of the members of the families of the clergy, and these were of invaluable service to the bishop in his personal intercessions.

The bishop's love for children brought its own reward. Many of the children of his clergy learned to love him. Frequently the bishop received letters from them, and was punctilious in replying to these in his own handwriting. As the children grew in years and went to school, the correspondence continued, and many were the letters written by the bishop to these young people and treasured by them to-day.

Meanwhile, the general work of the diocese was carried on by the bishop. Being a new diocese, it was necessary to draw up the various forms of service which were to be used on special occasions such as the laying of the foundation stone, the consecration and dedication of new churches, the dedication of new bells, and the consecration of a cemetery, etc. Using these forms for the first time, the bishop conducted services on many such occasions. There was the responsible task of appointing fifteen honorary canons for the diocese, followed by the service at which the archdeacons and the honorary canons were installed in the cathedral. Appointments were made to the vacant benefices, followed by the solemn duty of instituting them to their new livings. The bishop insisted on the service being held in the church of the parish to which the priest was to be instituted. Assistant curates were interviewed in regard to proposed changes of sphere, and these were duly licensed in a service compiled for the purpose. The bishop desired to interview each man when such a change was proposed, and to license him at a service in the

church in which he was to minister, or at a church convenient to those concerned, or later, in his own chapel.

Confirmations were held in various churches ; speeches were delivered at college festivals, and on the occasion of the Speech Day in many schools. The bishop summoned his examining chaplains to an important meeting to draw up the form of instructions to be issued to candidates for Holy Orders, to enunciate the necessary qualifications for the acceptance of such candidates, and to formulate the syllabus which was to be the intellectual test for candidates in the diocese. A high standard was set at this meeting, for it was rightly felt that it was better for a diocese to be understaffed than to be badly staffed. Moreover, with the varied nature of the service to be rendered in the various parishes, and with a high standard to govern the choice of candidates, it was felt that the diocese would appeal only to the finer type of man.

The same standard was maintained in drawing up the regulations that governed the choice of men desirous of becoming readers in the diocese.

The bishop was ever ready to prove the sincerity of his desire to be a Father in God to his flock. As a father he participated in their family life, sharing with the various branches of the family their joys and their sorrows ; and, when there was disruption and strife, endeavouring to promote peace and goodwill.

The Essex Agricultural Show was held at Waltham Abbey in June 1914, and the bishop

joined in the festivities of the day, and at the official luncheon responded to the toast of 'The Visitors.' In July 1914, a strike of the farm labourers for higher wages in North-west Essex threatened disaster to the agricultural life of that portion of his diocese. The bishop summoned the clergy of the parishes involved, and discussed the whole situation with them. As a result, he invited the farmers and the men to meet him in friendly conference. There were many preliminary difficulties to be overcome, but the bishop proved equal to the occasion, and the conference was held in private at Haverhill on 17th July. The *East Anglian Times* of 20th July, in an article dealing with the matter, states :

'After the Bishop of Chelmsford had so kindly volunteered to mediate between farmers and men at Haverhill to get to some agreement on the wages question, it seems a thousand pities that the proposed conference proved abortive. . . . For masters to say that a Union is not to be recognized is altogether out of date in this year of grace. The intervention of the Bishop of Chelmsford was welcome because it offered the chance of putting the dispute on a higher plane. It also gave a more friendly character to what after all is only a business deal between farmers and agricultural labourers. . . . A bishop who interests himself in this vital social problem affecting his flock is doing really good work in trying to promote peace and a good understanding all round.'

The visit of the Third Battle Squadron of the Royal Navy to Southend-on-Sea was a time of great rejoicing in that borough. The bishop, at the dinner given by the mayor to the officers of

the squadron, was invited to propose the toast of 'The Visitors.' The bishop was quick to recognize and appreciate the compliment thus paid to him. As bishop of the diocese he was not a visitor to the borough, but was looked upon as an integral part of their corporate life, for a visitor could not propose such a toast. His expression of appreciation was greeted with such applause that none could doubt the fact that he was a member of the family in that corner of the diocese.

On 7th April 1914, a disastrous fire occurred at Great Chesterford, a village in North-west Essex. Reading of the event in the daily press on the following morning, the bishop telegraphed to the vicar, and immediately journeyed to the village. With the vicar he visited all those who had been rendered homeless, and offered prayer on their behalf. The bishop was overjoyed to find that the vicar was a father to his people, and had already arranged to provide for the sufferers without outside help. The bishop was quite prepared to offer such assistance had it been necessary.

A railway accident at Ilford on the morning of Saturday, 2nd January 1915, resulted in much loss of life and physical injury. Important engagements did not allow the bishop to visit the parishes concerned till the late afternoon of Monday the 4th. In company with the vicar of Seven Kings, the homes of the bereaved and suffering were visited, and prayer offered on their behalf. Arriving at Bishopscourt after midnight, the bishop set out on the Tuesday morning, and, accompanied by the vicars of the respective parishes, visited

the remainder of the sufferers. Thirty homes were thus visited. The comment in his diary reads :

‘ It was heart-rending, but God used me, and I was able to bring some measure of comfort to my sorrowing and suffering people.’

One of the injured was a former member of the Men’s Service at St. Peter’s, Upper Holloway. Failing to recognize in the bishop the former curate of that parish, he afforded the bishop considerable amusement by telling him of Mr. Watts-Ditchfield and of some of the sermons preached by him. This incident was some slight relief from the strain of visiting in such sad circumstances.

Friday, 19th January 1917, will be long remembered as the date of one of the most alarming disasters within the memory of those living in London-over-the-Border. A fire occurred in one of the great munition factories in Silvertown, followed by a terrific explosion which was heard at a distance of one hundred miles. This resulted in considerable loss of life, much personal injury, and the devastation of property in the surrounding neighbourhood. The Mission Church of St. Barnabas, West Silvertown, was completely demolished. The bishop was soon on the spot, assisting by word and deed to relieve the widespread suffering and to comfort the bereaved. It was a tremendous task to care for the sick and to provide temporary accommodation for the homeless, but the Church, inspired by the example of her bishop, manfully played her part in the work

of Christian charity. The bishop conducted the funeral service of the two gallant firemen who gave their lives in the discharge of duty, and of the two children of the firemen; and subsequently laid to rest the earthly remains of eleven of those who perished. In his anxiety for the physical welfare of those committed to his charge, the bishop wrote a letter to the press suggesting certain precautionary measures by which a like tragedy might be avoided in the future.

The bishop went into residence at Bishops-court on 11th November 1914. His homeless condition before that date had proved a serious handicap in dealing with his correspondence, in the keeping of records, and in the filing of papers essential to the work of a diocese. It is difficult to realize the serious inconvenience caused in this way. His first two Ordinations were held at Chelmsford and Colchester, and admirable were the arrangements made by the rectors of both churches. The subsequent Ordination retreats were held at Bishops-court. The bishop felt that this was one of the most solemn duties of his episcopal life. Great care and attention were given to the preparations for the interviewing of candidates for Holy Orders. The interview itself was looked upon as a time of great responsibility and fraught with serious consequences to the life of the Church as well as to the life of the individual concerned. Everything possible was done to make the days immediately preceding the Ordination, and the Ordination itself, a time of great spiritual blessing to the candidates. The chap-

lain met the candidates at Chelmsford railway station on the Thursday afternoon, and a motor 'bus conveyed them to Bishopscourt, where they remained till the Monday morning following, when a motor 'bus took them back to the station. The following description, written by one who was ordained in 1915, gives a clear idea of the impression created in the minds of those ordained :

‘ Soon after the bishop commenced his work in the diocese, it was my privilege to obtain an interview as a candidate for Holy Orders. The bishop had not then taken up residence at Bishopscourt, but was still in London. I shall not easily forget my first interview. As I was ushered in, the bishop was standing in the middle of the room with his coat off, seeking to locate a stud which had slipped out of its accustomed place, and was somewhere down his back. He instantly greeted me and invited me to join in the search. The stud was found and returned to its place. The natural simplicity of the bishop, as set forth in this incident, and his obvious good humour, put me at my ease, and I was able to discuss the future in a perfectly free and frank way. The next time I met the bishop was during the Ordination retreat, a time no man can ever forget. We were privileged in the Chelmsford diocese ; for, in addition to the great experience in Ordination, there was the wonderful influence of that beautiful home life at Bishopscourt. The bishop's personality was the centre of it all ; but behind this was the love and care of a devoted wife.

‘ Looking back to my two Ordination retreats at Bishopscourt, they stand out in my life as clearly as if they had been but yesterday. The week before a man's Ordination is always a great week, but much depends on the spiritual atmosphere that he breathes during the two

days before the Sunday. This was ideal at Bishops court. It was all so real and natural, nothing forced nor artificial. We seemed to enter into something which I can only express as the heavenly spirit on earth, and it seemed to say to us, "Now you must be at your very best." Though the War was raging, the conversation was always bright and cheerful. This was due to the bishop's presence and manner. Pessimism was not permitted. Hope was the dominant note, for, though no one spoke more clearly on the evils of the day and their consequences, the bishop believed firmly in ultimate victory. Another thing that impressed me was the way in which the bishop controlled the conversation in the drawing-room on the Sunday evening of the Ordination. Many a humorous story would be told. Then, as the evening advanced, you would see the bishop look at his watch, and we found ourselves talking of the great things of life. It seemed as if Christ had drawn nearer, and soon we were on our knees, and the bishop was praying for us all in that simple, earnest way of his. No one seemed to be left out, and we went to our rooms thinking of "Him who loved us, and gave Himself for us."

'During the retreat we were brought into close personal touch with our bishop at the conference, in our interview, and during his charge.

'The bishop presided at the conference, and we all sat round. Those to be ordained priest were encouraged to narrate their experiences, and were aided by questions. There was an atmosphere of frankness and friendliness that enabled the answers to be given in a natural way. "Now, so and so, tell me, which do you prefer to visit, the saint or the sinner?" The bishop, after receiving many replies, would then show how Jesus was the Friend of sinners, and that one of the most important parts of our work was to win the outsider. We must be particularly careful not to give too much time to those whom

it is a pleasure to visit, at the expense of those whom we find it difficult to visit. Much valuable advice and help and many suggestions were given in regard to sermon-making, preaching, visiting, the organization and control of clubs, etc. The conference was full of life, and one could detect the bishop's anxiety to have the best possible for the diocese.

' As soon as I entered the bishop's study for my interview, before being ordained as deacon, I knew it was to be of a serious and spiritual character. I remember how the bishop went straight to my own spiritual life. That was the thing that mattered. His words were of a beseeching nature. He seemed to say: "I exhort you, I entreat you, I beseech you, live your spiritual life at your very best. Live so near to Christ that you always have the joy of His Presence. I do not ask you to do this for your own selfish gain, nor that you may win heaven, but that you may win souls for Christ." This thought of winning souls for Christ was a passion with him, and I saw it more clearly when he spoke to me alone. "The enjoyment of heaven will be yours," he said, "as you win others for Him." "Now," he went on to say, "I am your bishop, but I am your friend. Write to me at any time for advice, or come straight to me in any trouble."

' At the interview before my ordination as priest, the bishop spoke of my year's ministry, encouraging me and showing me the way to do better. He bade me take nothing lower than perfection as my standard in everything. He said he had confidence in me, and said he would watch over my future with prayerful and fatherly interest.

' At the conclusion of each interview came one of his simple, beautiful prayers. He seemed to know exactly what you needed most at the time. His prayer was full of thanksgiving, he coupled himself with me as a fellow-

worker and privileged sharer in the greatest work entrusted to man. My loved ones were mentioned by name and intercession offered that they might be sharers in the grace given. He prayed that no sin nor lack of faith in my heart should hinder God from giving His full gift, nor should prevent me from the full surrender of my life to His service. Then the bishop gave me his blessing, laying his hands upon my head. To me that moment has meant much. In fact, I can say most sincerely that every time he gave me his blessing, whether in the retreats, or in my home, or when I had occasion to see him at Bishops court, I always felt the power of God in that blessing. As the bishop shook hands with me at the close of the interview, he said: "God bless you. Keep very near to Him. Keep very near to Jesus."

' The bishop's charge was given to us on the Saturday evening at nine o'clock in the beautiful little church at Springfield. If ever there was a man who realized his responsibility, it was Dr. Watts-Ditchfield as he stood facing the eighteen candidates on that evening before our Ordination. It was one of the most solemn moments of my life. I have written against my few notes these words, "This is a great moment to live in." Full of earnestness and straight speaking was the bishop's charge. He reminded us that, on the morrow, we were to stand before God, as men of God. Even the world expected a clergyman to be a man of God. But we could not expect to be free from temptation. We would be faced with the temptation to pride, to slackness, and it may be even to the temptations of the flesh. Here he gave to us solemn warning by the lives of those who had failed. The bishop told us how, walking through a London workhouse, the master had bidden him notice a certain man but not to speak to him. When they had passed out, the master said to him, "Thirty

years ago that man was our vicar, and visited this institution as you are now." The sin that brought about his downfall was intemperance. The bishop then went on to appeal to us to lead a holy life, a consecrated life, to be the holy man of the parish, a conscience to all living within its borders. He called us to penitence, to prayer, and to the study of God's Word, and finished his charge on the strong, positive note of encouragement. It is impossible to express in writing the effect of the bishop's charge. It sent many of us to our knees for God's mercy and grace. Only that word of encouragement that our sufficiency is of God, and that, on the morrow, we were to receive power from on high, the gift of God the Holy Spirit, made it possible for us to go forward in the strength of the Lord God. These are the final words of the charge: "There is nothing, brother, that we cannot do in the spiritual world with the power of the Holy Spirit, and the abiding Presence of Jesus. We can win souls, men can be converted. We can cast out devils, and raise the dead. We go to our parishes to make them better or worse. May the Loving Father grant us to bring souls to Him, so that, at the Last Great Day, we shall not be failures."

'So I came away from each Ordination retreat with these words ringing in my ears, revolving in my mind: "The abiding Presence of Jesus," and "the power of the Holy Spirit," and that if there was one man among us who realized his responsibility, it was our bishop.'

In order to make the day as happy as possible, the bishop and Mrs. Watts-Ditchfield invited the relations and friends of the ordinands to Bishops-court on the Sunday afternoon, when the reception rooms and beautiful garden were thrown open for their use. In this way the bishop was able to weld the link that bound his younger

clergy to himself more firmly. It was a happy, homely gathering, and was in keeping with the day.

The bishop looked upon Confirmation as a solemn event in the life of the individual. The instructions in regard to Confirmation were drawn up only after much consultation, thought, and prayer. The service was made as impressive as possible, and candidates were led to feel their responsibilities as well as their privileges. The bishop emphasized the fact that Confirmation was not merely a promise renewed, nor yet was it simply admission to the Holy Communion. It was a service in which God gave to His children, in answer to the prayer of faith, and by means of the Laying on of Hands, the gift of His Holy Spirit. The bishop lent peculiar dignity to the question and answer by reminding the candidates that the answer was not made to him, as bishop, nor yet to the congregation, but to God. 'Do ye here, *in the Presence of God*,' and that was the only thing that mattered, the Presence of God. The candidates were bidden to stand, and then asked to bow their heads, whilst they realized the Presence of God. Then the question was put. In the second address, the candidates were reminded that the gift was to be used. By making their Communions regularly, they received the strength to go forward. 'If we do not use our physical powers, they fade and decay. If we do not use the gift that God has given, we fail to realize that we have it. I have the physical power to lift this chair, but it is only as I attempt to do

so that I realize the strength within me. God has given you the greatest power in the world. There is nothing that is impossible to the one who is filled with the Holy Spirit of God. There is no temptation that can overcome you, there is no power on earth that can compel you to do a thing against your will. But this power is given you in order that you may serve others.'

His message was accompanied by simple, but singularly apt, illustrations. Then the bishop gave the candidates a text which could always be associated with their Confirmation, and which should prove a help throughout life. A favourite text of the bishop, for this purpose, was Joshua i. 9 : 'Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.'

To emphasize the duty of service to others, the bishop urged that the collection at a Confirmation should be devoted to the missions of the Church overseas. By this means the candidates would help to give to others the blessings which they so richly enjoyed. In the country centres, the bishop liked to meet the candidates and their relations after the service. By this means he became known personally to many of his country folk.

The same intense desire to found everything upon a spiritual basis can be seen in all the bishop's dealings with the various organized bodies in connection with the diocese. Moreover, each body must be a living force and make its contribution of practical service to the corporate life of the

Church in Essex, otherwise there was no justification for its continued existence. The meeting of rural deans was held each year at Bishopscourt. The kindly consideration of the bishop was shown in the arrangements made to convey the rural deans from and to Chelmsford railway station. A short service of a devotional nature was held in the chapel, at which the bishop gave an address, and the meeting was held in the hall adjoining the chapel. Here the arrangements for the Confirmations to be held during the following year were fully considered, and then matters of vital importance to the life of the Church as a whole, and to the diocese in particular, were frankly and freely discussed. Lunch and tea were happy family gatherings, and the general effect of the day was to create a feeling of co-operation and comradeship between the bishop and his rural deans. The bishop magnified this office by giving to the rural deans greater responsibility; and they, on their part, were able to render more effective service to the Church and to the bishop.

The same principle dominated the life and meetings of the cathedral Chapter. Although the position and standing of the Chapter in the new diocese was difficult to define, the dignity and prestige of this body were upheld by the wisdom shown in framing the agenda for the Chapter meetings, and by the reliance which the bishop placed upon the judgment of the honorary canons in matters intimately connected with diocesan life.

In August 1914 the bishop's difficulties in founding and establishing a new diocese were increased

very considerably by the outbreak of war. That which proved a disturbing factor in the case of well-established communities, was a more serious hindrance to the work of the new diocese. The bishop accepted the responsibility, and used the opportunity for service thus afforded the Church. The troops temporarily billeted in the various parts of the diocese were a first claim upon the ministry of the Church. The bishop encouraged the clergy to set aside the customary parochial machinery in order that the needs, both spiritual and temporal, of our men should be supplied. Halls and schools were given over to the troops for social and recreative purposes. In one instance the bishop went so far as to allow the Church day school to be held in the nave of the church, as the school was the only building available for the use of the troops. In October 1914, many of the chaplains working with the troops in the diocese were invited to a conference at which the bishop discussed with them the best means of meeting the spiritual and temporal needs of the men. One result of this conference was the gift of 50,000 copies of the Soldiers' Prayer Book for the use of the various troops in Essex, and this number was augmented as the War continued.

Ever ready and ever anxious to address the church parades, the bishop was constantly engaged in this work. The various military hospitals in the diocese were visited by the bishop, and the wounded in the vicinity of Chelmsford were frequently the guests of the bishop and Mrs. Watts-

Ditchfield at Bishops court. The work of the Church Army and the Young Men's Christian Association in providing huts for the use of the men was stimulated and encouraged by the personal interest of the bishop. The bishop was present at the opening of almost every hut in the diocese, thus demonstrating his practical interest and his sympathy with the men.

His journeys throughout the diocese were fraught with incident. During the winter months, the regulations controlling the use of lights in Essex, a county particularly vulnerable to the enemy's attacks by sea and air, combined with the prevalence of fog peculiar to this county, rendered travelling by night difficult and dangerous. One Sunday evening during the depth of winter, the bishop's car groped its way through the fog towards its destination. Owing to the heavy rains many of the streams were in flood, and before either the bishop or his chauffeur realized it, the small car was in deep water at one of the open waterways through which the road passed. The water rushing through the car stopped the engine, and the bishop and his chauffeur stood on the seats and wondered what would happen next. Eventually a milk-cart appeared in response to their shouts, and conveyed the bishop to his destination, whilst the chauffeur made arrangements for the car to be towed out of the stream. The bishop treated the whole matter as a joke, and frequently described the incident in a humorous manner to the amusement of his hearers. The bishop's itineraries were frequently interrupted by

the air attacks of the enemy. In fact, his experience as a bishop in this matter seems to be unique in the recent history of England, for the episcopal residence at Chelmsford was damaged by direct attack from the enemy. In the days of the Zeppelin raids Chelmsford received much attention from these aircraft. About nine o'clock one evening a Zeppelin passed over Chelmsford on its way to London. When it was thought that all was clear and the residents had retired to rest, another Zeppelin appeared unexpectedly at 1 A.M. and dropped a bomb in close proximity to Bishops-court, shattering the glass in the windows and doors. A large piece of shell which had damaged the door was a relic of the enemy's attack on that evening.

The man in khaki was sure to find a friend in the bishop at all times. This gave rise to several amusing incidents of which the following is typical. In the early evening of one Saturday, the bishop was returning in his car from the outskirts of London. About fifteen miles from Chelmsford two soldiers on a motor cycle hailed the bishop, who ordered the car to be stopped immediately. The position was then explained by one of the men. 'We came out for a run on this cycle, but something has gone wrong. I can ride the bike if you will be good enough to take my friend in the car, but we cannot get back in time if we both ride the bike.' The bishop readily agreed, and the soldier took his place alongside the chauffeur, who was instructed not to disclose the identity of the bishop nor to desert the rider of the crippled

motor cycle. The cycle proved more refractory than was anticipated, and it was long after the hour at which the men should have reported when car and cycle arrived at the camp some miles on the other side of Chelmsford. A word from the bishop, and to the amazement of the two soldiers the car and cycle proceeded past the sentry to the headquarters of the regiment. Here the bishop explained that he was afraid that he had detained his two young friends beyond the hour at which they should have reported, and hoped that they would not suffer in consequence of his thoughtlessness. The assurance that they would not do so was cheerfully given by the smiling adjutant, the bishop shook hands with his impromptu guests, and entered the car. 'Great Scott! who is he?' was the question hurriedly asked of the chauffeur, and, when informed, both exclaimed, 'We would never have dreamt of stopping the car if we had known; but—he's *some* bishop!'

The bishop was equally anxious for the well-being of the officers, and in February 1916 invited the officers of the division stationed in and around Chelmsford to a conference at Bishops court. The bishop presided over the conference, at which practically every officer in the division was present. The Rev. E. A. Burroughs gave an address, which was followed by a discussion in which many of the officers took an active part. The result of the conference was beneficial alike to the bishop in his outlook on the spiritual life of the Army, and to the officers in their individual and

corporate spiritual life. His interest in the spiritual welfare of the troops within his diocese was not confined to the members of the Church of England, as the following extract from an article signed A. A. Green, in the *Jewish Guardian* of 20th July 1923, shows :

‘ On one occasion, during the War, when I used to act as officiating clergyman in the Eastern Command, I had been to Chelmsford on duty, and was on the railway platform waiting for my return train. The train was late, and I was walking up and down, and I passed and re-passed another waiting passenger who was in the garb of a high dignitary of the Church. After passing him once or twice, he gave me a cheery salutation, and I raised my hat in response. Shortly afterwards he stopped me. “ Ought I to know you ? ” he said. “ I am the Bishop of Chelmsford, and I think I ought to shake hands with any one who has been doing duty here to-day.” I told him who I was and what had been my errand. If he was courteous before, he now became most cordial. He asked me about Jews in the Army and what was being done for them, and expressed the liveliest interest in all I had to tell him. As an old East End clergyman, he was also interested in all I could tell him about our social work in his old district. We travelled up to London together. He was so cordial that he even asked me where I had tea, and when I told him I had gone to an hotel he said, “ Another time come to me, and if I am not at home I will arrange for your comfort at the hands of my people.” A few days afterwards he sent me his likeness marked “ In memory of a pleasant meeting.” Upon that I sent him our Authorized Prayer Book, and he wrote me his appreciation of the prayers it contained, and especially expressed his praise of the beautiful English rendering of Mr. Singer.’

It was not without most deliberate consideration and earnest prayer that the bishops of England and Wales decided that, in the October and November of 1916, a National Mission of Repentance and Hope should be held. The bishop threw himself whole-heartedly into this effort. On 3rd February 1916, a number of clergy and laity representing the various centres and interests of the diocese met at Bishops court, in response to the invitation of the bishop. The morning was spent in Springfield Church, where two addresses were given by the Rev. E. A. Burroughs. In the afternoon a conference was held, at which the best means of carrying out the National Mission in the diocese were discussed. The bishop was convinced that the first step was to deepen the spiritual lives of the clergy and to stimulate their enthusiasm. With this object in view he put before himself the ideal of giving every clergyman in the diocese the opportunity of going into retreat. It was a tremendous undertaking, but, although it was undoubtedly the ideal method, it appeared to be impracticable. Undaunted by the apparent difficulties, the bishop set out to achieve his purpose. By the kindness and generosity of Sir Victor Buxton, 'Warlies,' the residence of the late Sir Fowell Buxton, situated about two miles from Waltham Abbey, was placed at the bishop's disposal. The house and grounds were ideal for their purpose. The comfort and ample accommodation of the house, the pleasant amenities of its environment, the climb up to the little church set on the hill, and the view

from the crest of the typically English country, formed the best of surroundings for the days of guidance and meditation.

Before the house could be used, much had to be done. The larger bedrooms were subdivided into cubicles, each of which was furnished as a single bedroom, and thus accommodation was provided for thirty-seven clergy. The library was converted into an oratory, so that within the house itself there was opportunity for meditation and prayer. The provision of the staff of servants, and the necessary supply of linen, cutlery, crockery, etc., for such a large household received the necessary attention and all was in readiness for the retreats to commence in the middle of May. By the courtesy of the vicar of Waltham Abbey, the little church of Upshire was used as the chapel for the retreats. Two retreats were held each week, the one commencing on Monday afternoon, the second opening on the Thursday and closing on the Saturday. The clergy were invited to the retreats in accordance with the year of their Ordination. By this means some six hundred clergy of the diocese were in retreat during the months of May, June, and July. The laity were not forgotten, and two retreats for those holding responsible positions in the diocese were held.

It is impossible to estimate the value of these retreats and their permanent influence upon the spiritual life of the diocese. The financial obligation was great, but a generous response was made to the bishop's appeal. No charge what-

ever was made, but a box was placed in the hall, to which those participating in the retreat could contribute. In order to make it possible for all to attend, the bishop undertook to pay the expenses of any to whom such would be a prohibitive barrier.

The bishop was happy in his choice of those conducting the retreats. This was a most important factor in the success of the retreats, and it was no light task that devolved on the bishop in the selection and in the securing of men so admirably fitted for the work. The bishop thoroughly deserved the universal commendation of the organization and of the conduct of the retreats.

Meanwhile, the diocese must be prepared for the Mission. The bishop arranged for central meetings in each part of the diocese, and there he explained to clergy and laity the objects of the National Mission. Clergy were appointed as bishop's visitors, and these visited the individual parishes during the summer months, held services, and conducted meetings in preparation for the Mission. On 30th July a Pastoral Letter from the bishop was read in all the churches of the diocese. The following extracts show clearly the mind of the bishop on this matter :

‘ The National Mission of Repentance and Hope must mean much both to the Nation and to the Church. Neither can be left untouched by it. Both must be either the stronger because of its success, or weaker because of its failure. This, therefore, involves a great responsibility upon the Church collectively, and upon its

members individually, and I am therefore writing to you, as your Father in God, to urge you to recognize more than ever the need for this effort, and your own obligation in regard to it.

'First : The Need of the Movement. There is no necessity to enlarge upon this. The terrible world-wide War in which we are engaged reveals only too clearly how little hold the Church of God has upon the government of the world. The small hold which she has, even upon the life of England, is shown by the non-observance of Sunday, the decay of the old habit of Family Prayer, the neglect of Public Prayer and Worship, and by a general indifference to the ministry of the Word and of the Sacraments, which carries with it an indifference to the extension of the Kingdom of God, whether at home or abroad. These are signs that show the weakness of the Church and her inability to fulfil the task which her Lord has placed in her hands.

'Secondly : The Purpose of the Movement. This is not to be regarded as that of holding a series of parochial missions, nor as an effort culminating in the three or more days during which a messenger from the bishop will visit a parish, but rather as a corporate effort of the whole Church to lead the whole nation nearer to God, and to mould and fashion its national life on the teaching of our Lord. If this is to be effected the Church herself must be right with God, and strong in the power of the Holy Spirit, for it must be remembered that the result of this effort is not to be brought about by a triumph of organization or the creation of diocesan and other kinds of machinery. This is essentially a Mission of the Holy Spirit. The Church must prepare herself, as a whole.

'Thirdly : The Obligations resting upon each Individual Member with regard to the Mission. We are called upon to enter into Christ's sufferings, His life,

His work. He has left us an example. His mind of love, of unselfishness, of self-denial, and of service must be in us. We must live, not as the world lives, but as He lived. Our lives must be exalted by His Grace. Employers and employees who are His disciples are brethren. They must therefore not strive for mastery, but in honour prefer one another. In Him unity must be found. The Christian, whether man or woman, whether capitalist or workman, must be governed by His teaching in every relationship of life. He must set the example of righteous dealing at all cost, even the cost of life. The whole tone of the average Christian life must be raised so that the whole life of the Church may make itself felt in the world. It must mean much to the world that a man or woman is a Christian. The life lived must be real. It must be the daily and visible consecration to an ideal, an example and an inspiration to all around. Thus, as in the early days of the Church, the life of the Christian will once again become the most potent force in the evangelization of the world. The member of the congregation of Christ's flock, signed with the sign of the Cross, will not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and in this way, in the homes and in the workshops of England, witness will be quietly, courteously, and effectively borne for Christ and His Church.

‘This is a great spiritual war, which will have deep and wide effects. I can see many signs of the dawning of a better day. I fancy I can detect the steady onflow of a great tide of enthusiasm. I am certain there is a stronger sense of brotherhood, a greater readiness for sacrifice, and a longing for power in prayer—in short, a real desire to serve God with all our hearts. If this spirit becomes more intense, until the fervent heat consumes the dross of sloth and selfishness, there can be but one result; the Kingdom of God will come.’

In September the archbishop's messengers preached in the central churches and visited each rural deanery in the diocese. On the 13th and 14th September, the bishop's messengers from the country parts of the diocese met at Chelmsford, and on the 14th and 15th September, those from London-over-the-Border met at West Ham for devotion, meditation, and conference. In September also there was sent forth to the rural districts the Pilgrimage of Prayer. The Pilgrimage consisted of groups of three women bearing the thought of God to the people in the little villages. They visited five villages in some deaneries, in others four, spending about ten days and walking from village to village. In each place they were the guests of the villagers, staying, where possible, with the cottagers themselves. Far back in the summer the Pilgrims were chosen by the bishop, and they began to pray and study and think, so that each might give the message as best she could. A retreat was arranged for the Pilgrims on the 15th and 16th September. On 18th September twenty-eight of them went to Bishops court, some staying at the bishop's residence, and the rest being received by kind hostesses at the request of the bishop. Here the itineraries were arranged. Evensong was held in the chapel, at which the bishop gave them a farewell address. The rest of the story is best told in the words of the *Diocesan Chronicle* for October 1916:

‘The bishop told them to love people so much that they put themselves in other people's shoes, to remember with extreme sympathy that the poor people they were

to speak to had often a limited horizon, and a limited power of expressing themselves, but that their need was the great overwhelming need of us all—Christ. And the Pilgrims felt as they heard his words that the work given them to do, and for which they felt so inadequate, was possible after all, that fear and shyness need not be reckoned with, because walking along the roads with them would be the Lord who walked in Galilee.

‘The next morning we all met at the cathedral for the Holy Communion. The Pilgrims in their blue veils, their wooden crosses propped at the end of the pews, knelt in the middle aisle. And afterwards they went up, three by three, carrying their crosses, and knelt at the altar rails, and the bishop laid his hands on their heads, saying, “We send you forth in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” After breakfast at Bishops court they went their ways, with many good-byes, “God bless you,” “We’ll be thinking of you.” And as I write there they are, walking in the little villages, praying, and loving, and making friends, and glorious untold things are happening that we may never know on this earth and of which one cannot write.’

The bishop prepared the way himself for the visit of his messengers to the parishes of the diocese by holding opening services in six centres during the first fortnight in October. During the two months that followed, one of the bishop’s messengers visited each parish in the diocese for four days round the Sunday. This meant the releasing of clergy from their parishes to go forth as messengers and filling their places during their absence. All worked harmoniously, and the plan as outlined by the bishop was completed in every

detail. During the week preceding the visit of the messenger, a letter from the bishop was left at every house in the parish.

The bishop was the heart and soul of the Mission in his own diocese, and by his tireless energy and whole-hearted devotion enthused the critical and lukewarm to an outpouring of self in the desire to serve. The bishop realized the Church's opportunity, and strove by every means in his power to use it for the extension of Christ's Kingdom on earth. His clear knowledge of the opportunity and his wise foresight as to the possibilities of the Mission are demonstrated in his own words :

‘ Let the Church succeed in this great national effort, and she will have established herself as the controlling factor in the political and social life of the day. Let the message of the Cross sink into the hearts of the people of England, and England will be a new land, and a regenerated England will mean a converted world.’

When the bishop's messengers had completed their work, the bishop called the clergy together in conference at various centres to discuss the best means of following up the work of the Mission. These plans were interrupted by the determination of the Government to use all the available ‘ man-power ’ of the nation for the successful prosecution of the War. The bishop, writing on this matter in the *Diocesan Chronicle* of February and March 1917, says :

‘ The scheme for National Service includes, and rightly so, the clergy. But it is well to remember that,

according to the present and the late Prime Minister, the clergy have been and are rendering to the nation the greatest of all services by helping to build up its moral and spiritual strength. . . . It must be remembered that the clergy are already rendering national service of the greatest importance, not only by building up the spiritual and moral munitions, by which alone the nation can achieve true greatness, but also comforting the ever-increasing number of the bereaved, welcoming the men already returning to their homes incapacitated, and steadying the minds and hearts of people generally.'

Forms were obtained from the Director of National Service, and each clergyman in the diocese was called upon to fill up one of these and to return it to the bishop. In this way many clergy were released from parochial work to act as temporary chaplains to the Forces at home and abroad, many undertook work in the munition factories, on the land, and in other ways suggested by the Director of National Service.

The organization of such a scheme and the successful execution thereof involved much time, thought, and effort. But the bishop believed in the righteousness of our cause, and was ever ready to exercise his influence in contributing to the national strength. Speaking at Colchester in July 1915, the bishop said :

' I am thankful for the part that England is playing in the War. The British Empire is the greatest asset to humanity in the world to-day. It symbolizes the high ideals of freedom, mercy, justice, and righteousness. If anything were to come to lower the prestige of England to-day, it would be the worst thing that could happen

to the world at large. Yet this great empire is now in the midst of a terrible struggle. I believe most firmly that by the blessing of God we shall come out right. . . . The empire has risen to the occasion. . . . I am glad to see so many present in khaki. I wonder whether there is any young man present who hesitates to do his duty? I believe it is the duty of every young man at this time to stand forth and say boldly, "I am here. Whatever my country wants me to do, that I am willing to do." This is not a war of aggression, of the grasping of territory, of greed. If it were, I would not stand here and ask every man to take his place. It is in the cause of freedom, justice, and righteousness that I ask men to step forward and take their place.'

Speaking again at Colchester at the beginning of January 1916, the bishop said :

'England and the Allies are up against a big thing. Those who take a stand for a righteous cause are always up against a big thing. I believe we are fighting, not for aggrandisement—God forbid!—not for commerce—God forbid!—but for those great principles of righteousness, freedom, and liberty without which the world would not be worth living in. We are on the right side. Is there a man here who doubts it? . . . I am one of those old-fashioned people who believe in the power of prayer. . . . What did Cromwell say? "If you forget God, the water round your coast will not save you." I hope that during the year men will pray more than they have done in the past. I cannot understand men sending their lads to the Front to fight without praying for them. It is a mystery to me. I want this nation to be worth fighting for. Are we unselfish in the midst of war? Surely we ought to be a nation at our very best to-day. Are we? We must work hard and pray so that the nation may be worth the blood that is being shed on

our behalf. Every man to-day is being called to a higher, grander, and nobler life, no small life, no mean life, a big life, a strong life, a clean life. I ask you at the beginning of a new year to nerve yourselves as you have never done before, and say, "God helping me, I will play my part in this great day of opportunity." "

During Holy Week of 1916, the bishop called forth much adverse and hostile comment in the daily press by the fearlessness of his utterances at the mid-day services in St. Paul's Cathedral. In the course of his first sermon on Monday, 17th April, the bishop said that we were bound to win the War because we were on the side of righteousness, justice, and freedom. But if we wanted to win the War quickly we must make the instrument fit for the work. When an instrument was blunted it took longer to accomplish its work. All nations had in one way or another forgotten God. The moral sense of nations had been blunted by their actions. 'Had not the Allies much to answer for in the past—Russia for her treatment of the Jews, Belgium for the Congo atrocities, France for her overthrow of God and religion? Without, however, dwelling on our neighbour's faults, and whilst recognizing their heroic conduct at the present time, we should look on our own sins—the opium traffic forced on China, our refusal to interfere when Armenians were massacred, the neglect of Sunday, the prevalence of intemperance and impurity, the hastening to be rich, the division among the classes and the masses, the unhealthy public spirit as shown in the press, the neglect of the housing question,

the begrudging of money for old-age pensions, and the removal of the slums. 'The Church has lost her proper hold on the nation. After sixteen centuries of possession she has only five per cent. of her men communicants.' The bishop went on to advocate the opening of churches all day for intercession, Holy Communion on all Sundays and Holy Days, and a greater spirit of co-operation among Church people. 'Too much time is wasted over non-essentials, such as the advisability of the use of vestments or otherwise. In the craze for ease, people are demanding short sermons, short services, etc., but what we need is not short sermons nor short services, but the religion of the Cross and a life of self-denial.' The bishop proceeded to pay tribute to the many good qualities that the War had brought out in the self-sacrifice of our soldiers at the Front, and of our women at home, and then went on to urge that all should turn to the Lord this Holy Week and strive to hear God's voice. A striking extract from the bishop's sermon on the following day is : 'England will never be saved by conscription, by munitions, by wealth. These things may help, if used by a nation full of soul ; but England will only be saved by her soul-power. It is soul-power that dominates the world.'

The great majority of Englishmen saw behind the bishop's indictment his fiery enthusiasm and his earnest endeavour to create and promote conditions that would lead to the decisive victory of the Allied cause. Innumerable letters of gratitude and appreciation were received by the bishop

from men and women throughout the length and breadth of our land, and some from members of the Allied nations. The opinion of right-thinking people was reflected in the following article published in the *Church Times* of 20th April 1916:

““A flood of nonsense from a Bishop” was an evening contemporary’s description of the Bishop of Chelmsford’s sermon on sins of the nations, preached in St. Paul’s on Monday. In an age which, to a large extent, has lost all sense of sinfulness, it is not surprising to find the same insensibility reflected in the press. But was it nonsense to say that each of the Allied nations had, in its own way, incurred the Divine displeasure—one for its treatment of the Jews, another for the Congo atrocities, another for its attempt to “put out the lights of heaven”? And, for ourselves, there must be confessed the neglect of public worship, the prevalence of intemperance and impurity, the hastening to be rich by whatever means, the division of the classes, the refusal to right the wrongs of the poor. The bishop, if he condemned the nation, did not, however, spare the Church, which, he said, had lost its proper hold on the people. After sixteen centuries of possession, only five per cent. of its members are communicants. A comment on part of his lordship’s indictment of our own country is furnished by the Registrar-General’s report on births, deaths, and marriages for 1914, which reveal a lower birth-rate and a higher death-rate than in the preceding years, a state of things which amounts to race-suicide, and would be impossible where moral obligations were properly recognized. The bishop might have included in his enunciation of offences the baleful rise in the number of divorces, of which there were 1154 in 1913, but 1712 in 1914, a figure much in excess of the average for the preceding five years.’

The bishop, with his accustomed foresight, was not looking merely to the end of the War, but was striving also to create and promote the conditions which would enable the nation to reap the fruits of victory, and to settle down satisfactorily to the new life which would be the inevitable sequel to the War. His mind on this matter is reflected in a sermon preached at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields on Sunday morning, 5th December 1915, of which the following summary is taken from the *Diocesan Chronicle* for January 1916 :

‘ Although it was not in his nature to be a pessimist, yet looking out upon England with the eyes of one who had been associated for years with the work of the country, he recognized that the Church must be prepared for a great task. We were passing through a great crisis, but the real trial and test would come on the day peace was signed. England would then enter upon a danger zone far greater than that through which she was now passing. When peace was signed all the present fictitious prosperity would cease ; the great munition factories would all close, as well as the factories turning out the millions of pairs of boots and shoes for the troops, and the factories turning out garments in like quantities. Men would return from the Front different from what they were when they went out. The man from the village where he had spent the whole of his life, never earning more than fourteen shillings a week, and probably never having seen more than fifty people together in his life, would have seen things and scenes he had never dreamt of. He would come back with a wider horizon, and did they think that he would go back to his village of two hundred inhabitants and his weekly wage of fourteen shillings ? That was only one problem, however, and thousands of

other problems would spring up. Employers who had promised to keep places open for employees who had enlisted, would find that their trade had disappeared, and themselves unable to redeem their promise, and, in consequence, the voice of the agitator would be once more heard in the land. Unless there was a strong, vigorous Church to make its voice heard and its power felt, he doubted whether England which had been fought for, and for which so much blood had been shed, would be worth the price that had been demanded and paid.'

CHAPTER X

EPISCOPAL ACTIVITIES

THE usual difficulties that confront a bishop in the matter of Church finance were accentuated in the case of the Bishop of Chelmsford by many abnormal conditions. Chelmsford was a new diocese in which the corporate spirit had to be awakened and developed. The county of Essex, which comprised the greater portion of the diocese, was not wealthy. Moreover, the extraordinary increase in the population of that portion of East London which was within the county of Essex had taxed the resources of the old diocese of St. Albans in striving to provide the necessary church accommodation, and now the responsibility for this task was to be borne by the new diocese of Chelmsford. And then, within six months of the Consecration of the bishop, England was plunged into the greatest war of history, which sapped the resources of the country to an alarming degree, and which rendered the raising of additional sums of money for such a purpose as church extension wellnigh impossible.

In spite of these overwhelming difficulties the bishop courageously faced the problem, and succeeded in a manner that is almost incredible. The

creation of a Diocesan Board of Finance was the first step in establishing the financial position upon a sound basis. This was practically a new venture in Church finance, for it was only as recently as November 1912 that a Board of Finance had been elected for the diocese of St. Albans, as then constituted. This body continued to act as a joint board for the dioceses of St. Albans and Chelmsford until 31st December 1914, when it ceased to exist.

The Incorporation of the Chelmsford Diocesan Board of Finance was duly registered under the licence of the Board of Trade on 16th July 1914, the first members being the Essex members of the joint St. Albans Diocesan Board of Finance. The newly incorporated Board drew up a suggested constitution, an estimate of the amount needed for the year 1915, an apportionment of such amount between the rural deaneries, a suggested constitution of the diocesan committees, and directions regulating the procedure of the Board. These matters were brought before the first meeting of the Chelmsford Diocesan Conference on 27th October 1914, and after amendment were passed by that body. The new Board was duly elected at an adjourned meeting of the Diocesan Conference on 3rd December 1914.

The success attending the efforts of the Board is best demonstrated by the annual balance-sheet. In 1915 the estimated budget required from the parishes of the diocese was £8200, and in response to this the parishes contributed £5577. In 1923

the estimated budget was £10,455, and the parishes raised £8410, an amount that exceeded the original budget. In addition to this sum, an amount approximating to £3000 was raised for the Central Church Fund. The balance-sheet of the Board of Finance in 1915 showed a gross total of £10,050, 8s. 6d., whilst in 1923 this total amounted to £47,749, 13s. 6d. The manner in which the diocese was educated to a sense of its corporate responsibility is shown by the fact that in 1917 there were sixty-seven parishes which made no contribution to the Board, which number was reduced to twenty-nine in 1923.

The greatest financial problem of the Bishop of St. Albans was that concerned with the population which had rapidly spread over the border of London into Essex. In 1878 Bishop Claughton founded the Bishop of St. Albans' Fund in order to meet the needs of this new population. The immensity of the task as it presented itself to the first Bishop of Chelmsford is shown by the following statistics: In 1878 there were 170,000 people resident in this area, which was divided into 28 parishes with 37 places of worship. In 1914 the numbers had increased to 905,000 residents, with 68 parishes and 134 places of worship. Thus in 1914 the average population of each parish was no less than 13,500, whilst the parish of East Ham contained 50,000 souls, Ilford 40,000, and Barking over 30,000. No other district of this size and population in the kingdom had so few clergy working in its borders. For more than half a century the metropolitan corner

of Essex had been known as 'London-over-the-Border,' so that on the creation of the new diocese this title was adopted by the bishop for the fund that was to supply the financial means to carry on the spiritual work amid this vast population. London-over-the-Border is the gateway, the storehouse, and the dormitory of London itself. Vessels from every part of the world find their way to London through Tilbury, the Victoria, the Royal Albert, and King George v. Docks, all of which are in the diocese of Chelmsford. Unloaded at the docks, the merchandise of London is stored in close proximity to the docks till it is required in the city itself. Thousands of men and women live and sleep in London-over-the-Border, streaming up to London each day to assist in carrying on the work of the great metropolis. To meet the spiritual needs of this district which is essential to the life of the city of London, the bishop devoted himself wholeheartedly to the work of the London-over-the-Border Church Fund.

The first progressive step under the new regime was the removal of the office of the fund from the diocesan registrar's office in Westminster to a situation more accessible to the clergy and people of the London-over-the-Border area. At the same time a general secretary was appointed to devote his whole time to the organization of the fund. The removal of the office was part of a greater scheme for the establishment of a Church House within the diocese, where all its business could be transacted, meetings held, and where

clergy could obtain information in regard to diocesan movements and diocesan life. The old vicarage of St. John's, Stratford, situated in West Ham Lane, was acquired for this purpose. But this proved only a temporary measure, for the property was so obviously essential to the proper growth and development of the adjoining hospital that the trustees of the Church House felt bound to consent to its sale. However, a large and suitable house, No. 88 Romford Road, was acquired for the purpose and a piece of land purchased in rear thereof to provide space for the possible extension of the building. Here the Church House was permanently established in March 1916, and has proved of inestimable value to the diocese, and more particularly to the London-over-the-Border area, wherein it is situated. Within it were housed many of the offices of the various diocesan organizations. Here the bishop arranged to interview his London-over-the-Border clergy and laity. In its small chapel assistant curates were licensed to the parishes in that portion of the diocese. The examination of candidates for Holy Orders was conducted within its walls, and many and varied were the useful purposes that the Church House, Stratford, fulfilled.

In place of the annual London meeting, the bishop decided to hold a mass meeting in London-over-the-Border itself during May 1915. To ensure the success of this new venture, the bishop secured the Archbishop of York and the Bishop of Lichfield as speakers. So great was the

enthusiasm shown in the meeting that the Conference Hall, Stratford, was crowded to the doors with an audience of 2500, and the lower hall in the same building was equally crowded with an overflow meeting of 500, whilst many hundreds were turned away owing to lack of further accommodation. The same scenes of enthusiasm were witnessed in the following year at the May meeting of the Fund, when the bishop secured the Bishop of London and the Bishop of Sheffield as the speakers.

To stimulate interest throughout the whole diocese the bishop inaugurated another change in the aggressive work of the Fund. In former years one special service and meeting had been held to mark the anniversary of the Fund; but in 1915 the bishop requested the clergy throughout the diocese to observe Sunday, 10th October, as London-over-the-Border Sunday. Sermons were preached and intercessions offered on behalf of the Fund. In place of one meeting, nine meetings were held at various centres throughout the diocese, and the bishop placed before the audiences the spiritual needs of London-over-the-Border. To maintain the Fund during the years of war was a tremendous undertaking, but the success attending the bishop's efforts is to be seen in the following statistics:—

In 1913 the assets of the Bishop of St. Albans' Fund amounted to £17,000, whilst in 1923 these assets had increased, under the auspices of the London-over-the-Border Church Fund, to £65,000. The income from invested funds,

which in 1913 was £617, had risen to £2860 in 1923.

Despite the success that had been achieved in founding the Board of Finance and in maintaining and extending the London-over-the-Border Church Fund, the bishop saw that some entirely new source of income must be discovered if the Church in Essex was to attempt to meet the spiritual demands made upon her. In 1916 the bishop appointed a strong commission to investigate the requirements of London-over-the-Border. The report of the commission demonstrated forcibly the necessity for some fresh effort by the fact that £250,000 was urgently required for the following purposes: to purchase 17 sites for churches in populous areas; to complete the building of 13 churches; to build 11 churches, 29 mission churches, 30 parochial halls, and 13 vicarages. A commission was also appointed by the bishop to deal in a similar manner with the rapidly growing seaside resort of Southend-on-Sea. This commission made its report to the bishop in 1920, and showed the strenuous efforts required to minister to the spiritual needs of the population that had grown so enormously, as the following statistics show: in 1901 the population was 28,793; in 1911 it was 70,426, thus having more than doubled itself in ten years; and in 1919 it was approximately 94,924. For the resident population it was essential that 4 new sites should be purchased, 4 churches completed, and 11 churches, 16 parochial halls, and 13 vicarages should be built at a cost of £220,000.

The Church had also to face the difficult task of ministering to the spiritual needs of the vast number of holiday-makers who visit Southend during the summer months, when the population more than doubles itself.

A commission was also appointed to deal with the spiritual needs of the country districts. Its range of inquiry was to include the union of benefices, the questions of unwieldy vicarages and of unnecessary outbuildings attached to many of the vicarages, the erection of huts and rooms for the use of the villagers, and the provision of a van for evangelistic effort. Among the general needs for the proper equipment of the diocese were the provision of a permanent diocesan Retreat House, with a body of priests to be at the disposal of the bishop, the extension of the cathedral, the augmentation of the fund available for the training of suitable candidates for the ministry, the increase in the stipends of assistant curates and incumbents so that they might receive a living wage, the money necessary for the establishment of the work among women on a satisfactory basis, and the maintenance and extension of the educational work of the diocese. A modest estimate of the total amount required for the particular and general diocesan needs was half a million pounds. To add to the stupendous financial burden that the diocese was thus called upon to bear, many public bodies acquired large tracts of land in Essex during 1919 in order to meet the demand for housing accommodation. One of the largest schemes ever undertaken was that put forth by the London

County Council, who acquired 3000 acres of land between Barking and Dagenham, on which they proposed to erect over 24,000 houses, and thus bring into the county a new population of 120,000 people at least. This necessitated the immediate provision for the future purchase of eleven sites upon which would be built churches, halls, and vicarages. Other large housing schemes were put forward at the same time, including one for the erection of 2000 houses in the vicinity of Ilford for the City of London Corporation. In a letter published in the *Diocesan Chronicle* of February 1919, the bishop presented these urgent problems to the diocese. The bishop writes :

‘ I have abstained, owing to the War, from putting these matters forward, but now I am compelled to ask the diocese to equip itself for the great work. . . . I have put the issue clearly. It is my duty to guide the Church, and I say frankly, with all the responsibility of my office, that the Church in her equipment is not ready for her work. I am appointing a strong and representative committee to go into the whole question and report. Amid it all let us remember that all these things are but means to an end. It is spiritual power, and not financial power, on which the Church rests and depends.’

In March 1919, the bishop summoned a meeting of the leading laymen of the diocese to consider the best means of meeting the financial needs. This was followed by a joint meeting of the Board of Finance and the London-over-the-Border Church Fund, at which it was unani-

mously decided to support the bishop in the appeal that he was about to launch, under the title of the Bishop of Chelmsford's Crusade Fund, as the best means of raising the necessary money. An executive committee was appointed to carry through the scheme within ten years, and to formulate plans for so doing. The inaugural meeting of the Crusade took place at Chelmsford on 18th September, when two hundred clergy from all parts of the diocese, with the exception of London-over-the-Border, met together for a quiet morning in the cathedral, and a conference in the afternoon. A similar gathering was held in West Ham on 25th September for the clergy of London-over-the-Border.

On Sunday, 21st September, the bishop's Pastoral Letter in connection with the Crusade was read in the churches of the diocese, and intercessions were offered on behalf of the Crusade. Meetings were held at various centres throughout the diocese during the winter of 1919-1920, at which the bishop explained the object of the Crusade. A meeting to enlist the sympathy and support of the city of London in the Crusade was held at the Mansion House on 1st December. The Lord Mayor of London presided, and the speakers were the bishop, the Marquess of Salisbury, K.G., and the Earl of Selborne, K.G. In 1920 was inaugurated the Self-Denial Week from 10th to 17th October, when the Church-people of the diocese were asked to deny themselves on behalf of the Crusade Fund, and to spend the week in prayer. This Self-Denial

Week has been a special feature of the Crusade each year.

Although the response to the appeal of the bishop on behalf of the Crusade Fund was not all that had been hoped for, the following statement shows how successful the effort proved during the years immediately following the War, when the financial burdens were pressing most heavily upon the individual and corporate resources of the nation. In 1920 the Crusade Fund received £21,497, 15s. ; in 1921, £10,253, 4s. 9d. ; in 1922, £8941, 14s. 7d ; in 1923, £7353, 2s. 3d. ; making a total of £48,045, 16s. 7d. In addition to the amount actually received, there were promises of £7952, 4s. 11d., making a gross total of £55,998, 1s. 6d., with another six years of life before the Crusade completed its work.

The bishop rendered permanent and valuable service to the diocese by enlisting the sympathetic interest and practical support of Lady Pearce in the vast problems that confronted him. Lady Pearce bequeathed £10,000 to the Board of Finance for the formulation of a scheme for granting pensions and allowances to the clergy and also to their widows and children, and £15,000 to the London-over-the-Border Fund. The residue of her estate Lady Pearce left to be divided between the London-over-the-Border Church Fund and the Board of Finance. Such residue was subject to the payment of certain annuities, so that the diocese would not receive the full benefit for some years. By the end of 1923, £30,000 had been received on account of

this residuary estate, and on the death of the bishop £6020 was received by the diocesan authorities, being one-half of the balance of a Trust Fund, the interest on which had been given by Lady Pearce to the bishop for the period of his life. Thus no less a sum than £61,020 had already been secured to the diocese under the will of Lady Pearce solely through the instrumentality of the bishop, and the diocese was yet to receive further substantial amounts from the residuary estate.

The bishop was desirous of co-ordinating the funds of the diocese, and in 1921 he appointed a committee to deal with this matter. In accordance with the recommendations of the committee the offices of the three bodies—the Board of Finance, the London-over-the-Border Church Fund, and the bishop's Crusade Fund—were established at the Church House, Stratford, under the supervision of Archdeacon Bayne, with Mr. S. C. Lambert as secretary of each of the three funds.

Thus the finances of the diocese had been placed on a sound basis, and provision made for their successful operation in the future.

Whereas the bishop was desirous to have his own diocese thoroughly equipped for service, he recognized that this was impossible unless the Church herself was efficiently organized. This was the motive that inspired him to give his support to the Enabling Bill. In the *Diocesan Chronicle* for December 1919, the bishop writes thus :

‘ We believe the Bill is to pave the way for greater spiritual effectiveness on the part of the Church. If this is not to be the result, some of us would count the time wasted upon its discussion. Therefore I suggest that the clergy everywhere should ask their people to pray daily both publicly and privately for the Bill, and for Parliament, and especially that the latter may be led to pass it into law, if it be the will of God. Prayer is the Church’s mightiest weapon for all that is required for her work. Let it be used to the full and all will be well.’

His reasons for supporting the Bill are clearly enunciated as follows :

‘ The Church is the oldest institution in the country, and it would be surprising if, in the course of centuries, much of her machinery had not become antiquated and out of date.’ . . . ‘ In the days when the Church alone represented the religious instinct and faith of all Christians in the land, and when all the members of both Houses of Parliament were members of the Church, it came about that, practically, the Church was governed through Convocation and her Synods, in which bishops and priests assembled, and by the Houses of Parliament, which really formed the House of Laymen for the Church. The growth of Nonconformity, including the Roman Catholic Church, led to the opening of the doors of Parliament to men who were not members of the Church. As a result of this change the difficulty of any wise, full, and efficient alteration in the administration and discipline of the Church became increasingly great, until it seemed impossible to hope for any real and adequate improvement so long as every reform required by the Church had, of necessity, to pass through each House of Parliament a first and a second Reading, a Committee

stage, Report, and a final or third Reading. This impasse led, upon the issue of the Report of the Church and State Committee, to the adoption by the Representative Church Council of the Bill, commonly called the Enabling Bill, which by God's blessing was passed by both Houses of Parliament, and has become the law of the land.

'The Enabling Act in itself does nothing to reform abuses or to alter any single department of Church life. It leaves the Church exactly as she was before, except that it enables the Church to formulate the reforms she desires, and on the other hand enables Parliament by an easy process and without undue loss of time to carry into law the reform which the Church desires. If the Church is cold and apathetic, then she will not use the powers which the Act bestows upon her, while on the other hand, if the Church is keen and alert to use the possibilities which the Act opens out to her, then a glorious era of reform is before us. The Act entrusts the National Church Assembly with the right to formulate any Bill dealing with any phase of Church life, and the Bill can be passed and become law by its being presented to each House on only one occasion. The gain to the Church by this arrangement is great, and throws upon Church-people a great responsibility.'¹

The bishop at once embarked on a great teaching campaign, so that the machinery of the Church in his diocese might become efficient to meet the new demands and to make full use of the opportunities afforded by this measure. The importance of the electoral roll was emphasized in such a manner that before the end of 1920 there were no less than 95,525 electors in the diocese. The

¹ *The Church and her Problems*, pp. 35 and 36.

regulations governing the Diocesan Conference were amended, and, in addresses to Ruri-decanal Conferences, the duties and privileges of Parochial Church Councils and of the Conferences themselves were set forth.

The year 1920 proved to be of considerable importance in the life of the bishop. On 21st April he took his seat in the House of Lords, and read prayers at the opening of the House for the first time during the week commencing 25th April.

Although more than six years had elapsed since the Consecration of the bishop, the intervention of the War necessitated the postponement of the Primary Visitation until the spring of 1920. It assumed importance by the fact that it was the first visitation of the new diocese of Chelmsford. The information tabulated in answer to the Articles of Inquiry provided the record for future generations of the state of parochial life within the diocese in the opening years of its existence.

For the delivery of the charges in the actual week of Visitation, 3rd to 8th May, six convenient centres were chosen to which the clergy of groups of deaneries were cited. The proceedings each day commenced with the attendance of the deputy-chancellor and the registrar at the parish room to receive the presentments of the churchwardens. Divine service followed immediately in the church, the registrar called over the parishes and incumbents, and then the bishop delivered his charge. The day was divided into a morning and afternoon session, with an interval for lunch.

The charges dealt with the Church within the Diocese, the Church and her Government, the Church and her Services, the Church and some of the Problems before her, the Church and her Mission, and the Church and the Basis of all her Work. These were published under the title of *The Church and her Problems*.

Throughout the charges can be seen the bishop's sense of responsibility, his earnestness, his desire to be unbiased in all his judgments, his tenderness towards the flock entrusted to his care, and, above all, his ardent desire to establish the whole life of the diocese on a spiritual basis. This is demonstrated in his charge on the Church and her Services, which, of necessity, dealt with matters controversial, but closed on the dominant note of spiritual encouragement :

‘ But I know you, my brothers, and I thank God for your devoted lives and heroic and self-denying labours. Although I have been compelled to speak to-day at length on grave irregularities, I realize that although they may be large in the aggregate, the number of those affected is small in comparison with the large number of devoted servants of our Lord and of His Church. Some among you may be discouraged, some have felt the lack of recognition, others again may be feeling the fight keen and the struggle long. To one and all I say, “Your Master is with you.” Remember He who said “Go,” said likewise, “I am with you always,” and as you wend your way back to crowded town or the loneliness of country hamlet I pray God your eyes may be opened and you may see the King in His beauty by your side saying to you : “Fear thou not, for I am with thee ! be not dismayed, for I am thy God ! I will strengthen

thee ! yea, I will help thee ! yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness.”’

In July 1920 the bishop was privileged to take part in the Lambeth Conference. For the sixth time, since the first gathering in 1867, the bishops of the Churches in communion with Canterbury met at Lambeth. Although the Conference is a purely private gathering, and not a legislative body, it is one of the most important gatherings of the Anglican Communion. The bishops met to confer on matters of practical and more immediate interest to the life of the Church, and to frame resolutions embodying what they may believe expedient for guidance in regard to future policy and action. The 1920 Lambeth Conference will be long remembered for the discussion and resolutions on Reunion. The impression made upon the bishop is best described in his own words, written to the diocese in the *Diocesan Chronicle* of August 1920 :

‘ The Lambeth Conference is over, but it will live in history. It was one of the largest gatherings of bishops ever held, and, in my opinion, one which will be, by God’s blessing, one of the most fruitful which the Church has ever known. Nothing but the prejudice, the blindness, the wilfulness of men can prevent its being so. Many of us entered it in doubt, in perplexity, and even with dread. I venture to say all of us left it full of thanksgiving and of hope. It was a time which no bishop can ever forget, or wish to forget, and was a Conference great in wisdom, power, and above all in the Spirit of our Lord. It is not my intention to speak now of its conclusions, so momentous on Labour, the Position of

Women, Spiritualism, and on other questions. I must not anticipate the discussions upon them at the Church Congress, but will refer only to the question of Reunion, the most difficult of all problems before the Conference. How could a Conference so large and so varied arrive at any conclusion on such a topic with anything like unanimity ?

‘ Think of the difference in the character of the dioceses represented : London mighty and unique ; New Guinea ; Uganda and Korea ; Madras and Tennessee ; Sydney and Toronto ; Wiapu and Brechin. Or think of the difference in ecclesiastical outlook of the bishops of Zanzibar and of Durham ; of Uganda and of Nassau ; of Manchester and of Algoma ; and of Bishop Osborne and the Bishop of Liverpool. As your mind grasps these differences, so great and so seemingly irreconcilable, ask how it came about that the “ Appeal on Reunion ” was carried in a crowded House with only five dissentients, with, I think I am right in saying, not one of those I have named among them.

‘ Truly it was of God, and of God alone. Prayer, much prayer, had been offered, and here was the answer. When the momentous vote was taken after a full discussion, I wonder whether there was a bishop present with eyes dry. As the Primate asked us to stand in silence and thank Him, we all felt that we had not only been guided and directed, but ruled in our hearts by the Holy Spirit of God. We were moved by Him, and never will any of us forget the moment when all struck up with one heart and mind, “ Praise God from whom all blessings flow.” We felt that we were at the beginning of a new era, the era when the Lord’s will shall be done and His people shall become one, and in the strength of unity and of His Great Name go forth to win the world for Him.

‘ I feel I cannot here speak of the resolutions. They

may not be all one could desire in this direction or that, but they were passed in the spirit of conciliation. One word I must say. During the whole discussion of the Conference, and in the fortnight of daily committees on Reunion, I never heard from any bishop a single word respecting our Nonconformist brethren that I wished unsaid. There was the most complete recognition of the wonderful spiritual influence which was exerted by them both at home and abroad, and the resolutions were passed with a sincere desire that they should be free from any word or phrase which would be likely to wound the hearts of those of our brethren in Christ with whom we wish to join hands. I am anxious that the spirit of Lambeth should spread into the diocese and into every parish. If only we get the right atmosphere, the right spirit, then difficulties will cease to loom big. In the presence of the Master His servants should only see Him and ascertain His will, so I ask that the Prayer for Unity should be used regularly Sunday by Sunday. After the Church Congress I shall hope to deal with the questions raised so far as they affect the diocesan working, but it must be borne in mind that the Lambeth resolutions, mighty though they are in influence and importance, are not legislative in character. They are referred to the various provinces for consideration, and until this has been given and decisions reached, they must not be acted upon by individual incumbents without authority. It may not be out of place if I venture to name three persons to whose presence and action the Conference owes probably more than to any other three of its members. The Archbishop of Canterbury was the really great figure of the Conference. He stood by himself in experience, knowledge, and wisdom. As one speaker said, he taught every bishop present lessons of patience and of wisdom, which if followed would prove of inestimable benefit throughout the Anglican Communion. The rank and

file of Church-people little realize the greatness of their Primate. But the bishops do, and they thank God for the present occupant of the Chair of Augustine and pray God to spare him for many years to come. As Chairman of the Committee on Reunion, the Archbishop of York's task was one of the most difficult in the Conference, but he fulfilled it in such a way as to win, not only an admiration for his great gifts, but also our affectionate esteem. The "Appeal" is largely due to him, and his speeches deeply moved the Conference. But of the unofficial members the one who of all others impressed the Conference was the Bishop of Zanzibar. As is well known, I differ most profoundly with many of the opinions which he holds, but no bishop in the Conference impressed it more from a spiritual standpoint than this bishop. His lofty tone, his abandonment of mere party, even when maintaining his own position, his deep devotion and loyalty to his Lord, which were manifested in every speech, made the whole Conference feel that, however much it might differ from him on many points, they were listening to one who truly lived near his Lord.

'I have perhaps departed from custom in thus giving a glimpse of the heart of the Conference, but its resolutions are such that I think it is of the greatest importance that the whole Church should realize to some extent its character and the spirit in which it moved and had its being, which truly was of the Lord. I thank God for the privilege of membership of such a gathering. May God watch over the precious seed which the Conference has sown in His Name!

'The Evil One may seek to hinder its growth, and may even strive to use the Children of God as his instruments. Let each of us watch and pray lest we enter into temptation. May God give us the spirit of humility and of love!'

The coming of the Church Congress to the county of Essex for the first time during October 1920 evoked much interest and enthusiasm in the young diocese. Arrangements were almost complete for this event in 1915, but all plans had to be cancelled owing to war conditions. Southend-on-Sea was chosen to be the place of meeting, as it seemed well fitted to provide the necessary accommodation and hospitality. Though the Church Congress has no official right to speak in the name of the Church, the frank and full discussion on the public platform of questions vitally affecting the national life demonstrates to the world the fact that the Church does care for the things that loom so prominently in the public mind, and has a conscience in regard to the problems that confront man in his social life. At no time during the long history of the Congress did public affairs call more urgently for wise and sympathetic consideration at the hands of the Church and her leaders than at this particular period. The Southend-on-Sea Congress promised from the very commencement to be full of life and vigour. The subject chosen, *The Living Christ and Problems of To-day*, gave wide scope to deliberation and discussion. Included in the programme were the Healing of the Moral Wounds of War, Problems of the National Assembly, and the Resolutions of the Lambeth Conference. The fact that the Congress followed so closely upon the Lambeth Conference enabled the platform of the former to be more representative of the Church overseas than is possible in

normal years. The Archbishops of Canterbury, Sydney, and Capetown consented to preach at the three opening services, and the Archbishop of Brisbane accepted the invitation to be one of the selected speakers. The attendance at the various sessions surpassed even the most optimistic expectation, and the revenue exceeded the expenditure.

Although crowded audiences and a credit balance-sheet are contributory factors, a Church Congress does not depend upon these for its success. Much depends upon the personality of its president. In this respect again anticipatory predictions were more than fulfilled. The *Church Family Newspaper* for 13th October 1920 reads :

‘ Our hopes rise high ! The President of the Congress, the Bishop of Chelmsford, is a man of vision and courage, with a quick appreciation of the needs of the moment, and a strong grasp on practical affairs. He is steeped in the spirit of Reunion, and is by disposition as well as by grace a practised optimist. He will give the Congress a clear lead.’

The *Church Times* of 15th October 1920 writes :

‘ The 1920 Congress is fortunate in its President. It would be idle to pretend that the views of the Bishop of Chelmsford are on all points identical with those of Catholics, but he is no partisan in the narrow sense of the term. Himself a convinced Low Churchman, he possesses to an extraordinary degree the power of appreciating those whose beliefs differ from his own, and of respecting convictions which he does not share, while his speeches and votes in Convocation prove that he is

not a slave to party. This quality alone admirably fits him to preside over a Congress which is to discuss such questions—to name but two—as “The Lambeth Resolutions on Reunion,” and “Woman and the Church.” As a speaker to men the bishop is admirable, while his interest in all questions affecting the Church and Labour, his power of speaking plainly to both masters and men, and his untiring energy in the service of the Church are widely known and appreciated.’

The *Chelmsford Diocesan Chronicle* of November 1920 states :

‘Taken as a whole the success of the 1920 Church Congress exceeded expectations. It was not only successful from the point of view of the importance of the subjects discussed, the pre-eminence of the readers and speakers, the wide and many-sided vision of all who took part in it, the absence of mere party cries—but also for the unflagging interest manifested by the audiences. Evidently Church Congresses have come to stay, and a wonderful uplifting may well be looked for from their informal but no less authoritative pronouncements.’

The success of the Congress was due in no small measure to the personal interest of the bishop in all the preparations, and to the manner in which he discharged his duties as president. The following extracts from the leading article of the *Guardian* of 22nd October 1920 show the impression created by his Presidential Address :

‘The Presidential Address of the Bishop of Chelmsford at the Southend Church Congress will take high rank among the many notable utterances on similar occasions which have preceded it. Speaking on such a platform so soon after the Lambeth Encyclical, Dr. Watts-Ditchfield had a great opportunity, and he has taken advantage of

it in a way which cannot fail to leave its mark upon the Church. Of the "fervent zeal" which characterized his address from beginning to end we need say nothing—that was to be expected from a prelate whose simple, direct, Evangelical language long ago impressed great masses of people of a type to which it is often singularly difficult to bring home the truths of the Gospel. But if the form of his address presented no novelty, its substance was remarkable and indicated a degree of courage which we should be glad indeed to recognize more frequently in occupants of the episcopal bench. The Bishop of Chelmsford spoke not as an Evangelical leader, but as a truly Catholic bishop, and we shall be greatly surprised if the latter part of his address fails to produce a wide response throughout the Church of England in this country. The whole world is just now seeking Peace—Peace between peoples and among peoples, and the President of the Southend Congress points out to us frankly and explicitly that the first duty of a Christian Church is to be at peace with itself.'

'The Bishop of Chelmsford is emphatic that we must first be busied with ourselves and within our own borders, that we must seek peace one with another, and no longer be content to be divided into warring factions actuated by a party spirit which sometimes takes exceedingly bitter forms. Nor is he content with those generalities which advance nothing. He has a definite, constructive programme which he presses earnestly upon the Church, and more especially upon those who share his own clean-cut Evangelical views. It is precisely because he speaks as an Evangelical that his words are of such pronounced eirenical importance. What, he asked, does it matter if another man's point of view is diametrically opposed to mine, so long as he is equally loyal to the Direct Head of the Church? He therefore boldly proposes the "whole-hearted inclusion" of the Anglo-Catholics in

the comity of the Church.' . . . 'He sees no reason why an episcopal message of recognition and goodwill should not have been sent to the recent Anglo-Catholic Congress, especially in view of the fact that when the Wesleyan Conference met in London they did take that brotherly course.' . . . 'We welcome the bishop's clear and logical exposition of the four courses open to the Church in its relation to those whom she, often with abundant cause, looked upon as insurgents. She may repress, tolerate, or embrace. It is plainly impossible to repress so powerful a body of opinion; toleration has been tried and has resulted only in drift. The remaining alternatives are expulsion and "whole-hearted inclusion." ' . . . 'We need a better understanding, not only of each other but of what is essential, and if, as we hope, Dr. Watts-Ditchfield's eirenicon helps to that better understanding, he will have taught us all, what we are not always quite willing to recognize, that to ensure peace is the first practical duty of Christian men. For two generations the Church has been reft in two by party spirit, and if that spirit could be eliminated a long step would be taken towards that unity which would be the consummation of so many hopes and so many prayers.'

An interesting addition to the proceedings on the first afternoon was the presentation to the bishop of his portrait, which had been painted by Mr. G. Hall Neale, and presented to the diocese by Mr. Ormond Blyth. In making the presentation, the Archbishop of Canterbury said :

'It was with no small pleasure and with a sense of thankfulness that he tried to voice for them all what the significance of the presentation meant to every one there

who felt as keenly as he did. They desired that the first Bishop of Chelmsford should have the record of his presence and personality before the eyes of those who, a hundred years hence, in the quite different circumstances of diocesan life, wanted to know what was happening in the years that followed the Great War. He felt himself almost bewildered by the thought that the actual leadership of that new diocese had only existed for six years. When he recalled all that had happened during those years which coincided with the time when they were tried and distracted by the War, he began to wonder whether one was not mistaken in regard to dates.' . . . 'In his presence he could not say all he would like to say, but he asked them to look at the flight of those years and to say whether the right choice was made. They knew better than he did what his work had been, and the enduring fruit of his wise administration. They knew his power of sympathy, his power of showing quiet, affectionate care in times of sorrow and difficulty, as well as the power of stirring up by his energy and enthusiasm. He knew, perhaps, better than they did, the power of his personality and the work he had done in the Church at large. No one when he had something which he could handle was listened to with more respect, more attention, and more fruitfulness than the bishop whose portrait he was now about to present. The fact that he was able to convince by word as he had convinced by act and the power of his sympathy those who agreed with him, as well as those who did not agree with him, was only one of the many characteristics shown in the words he spoke and the leadership he bore. After referring to the bishop's work in connexion with the National Mission, his Grace added, in conclusion, that if they had reason during the extraordinarily difficult years of War time to be thankful for such action taken, such words spoken, and such fruit following on the part of the man whom

they honoured that day, might they not look forward with hope during the next few years and expect greater things than these ? ' ¹

At the beginning of 1922 the Archbishop of York felt constrained to relinquish his responsible position as Chairman of the Council of the Church of England's Men's Society, and the Bishop of Chelmsford was chosen as his successor. The change was effected during the Annual Conference of the C.E.M.S. at Leicester in June 1922. The archbishop explained that, according to their constitution, the leader was chosen by the two archbishops. This was not a restriction of the Society's choice, but a recognition of the importance of the movement. The archbishops had sought for a man who would go in and out of the branches inspiring men to fresh enthusiasm and renewed service, who would carry on the traditions of the Society, who could attend the meetings of the council, and who would lead them along spiritual lines. They believed they had found such a man in the Bishop of Chelmsford. The prolonged burst of applause that greeted the announcement showed that the choice met with the full approval of the Conference. As the bishop rose to respond, the whole meeting stood to welcome, with applause, their new leader. He said that he had accepted the chairmanship only from a keen sense of duty to God and His Church. He asked for their prayers, for without that he must fail. He had no policy to propound

¹ *The Record*, 21st October 1920.

at present, but he would give them as his keynote, 'The World for Christ.'

Many of the bishop's friends viewed with alarm the acceptance of this further burden of responsibility, and the additional strain that would be imposed upon his physical strength by the conscientious discharge of the duties which such a task involved. This feeling was accentuated by the bishop's announcement that it would in no wise interfere with his duties within his diocese and in the Church at large, for, as he did not play golf nor indulge in any form of recreation, he would regard his work in the C.E.M.S. as such. How faithfully and zealously he fulfilled his task is shown by the fact that no less than twenty centres, such as Sheffield, Southampton, Bristol, and Cardiff, were visited during the ensuing twelve months, when addresses were given to gatherings of clergy in the afternoon, and to mass meetings of men in the evening.

The bishop rendered signal service to the Church, and more particularly to the Evangelical school of thought, by summoning the Evangelical bishops and prominent clergy to a private conference at Coleshill in June 1922. For some considerable time there had existed a divergence of opinion within this school in regard to such matters of doctrine as the Bible and its inspiration, and the Atonement. Many of the younger clergy were not prepared to accept the dogmas of faith that had been enunciated by the older Evangelicals. The position in regard to the Church Missionary Society was critical, for the

younger men of liberal views in the mission field were viewed with suspicion, and their work suffered accordingly. It seemed imperative that some form of agreement should be reached, as otherwise it must inevitably result in a split in this great society which would be prejudicial to the Church in her task of evangelizing the world. It was a bold step to summon such a conference, but in so doing the bishop asked that they might meet in the spirit of prayer, and, at the feet of their common Lord, learn what was His will for them. The Conference was successful in achieving the object for which it was summoned. A comprehensive statement was unanimously adopted, with two abstentions, and the future of the Evangelical school of thought was assured, as well as the effective carrying on of the work of the C.M.S. The following extracts from the *Record* of 22nd June 1922 are instructive :

‘ The Conference of Evangelical clergy held at Coleshill last week was a momentous event, fraught with the gravest possible issues, and it has accomplished much. It may, indeed, be said that it has accomplished more than even its most ardent friends expected.’ . . . ‘ The membership of the Conference was singularly compact and representative. The presence of no fewer than ten bishops gave the gathering a character of its own, and their counsel was always most illuminating. The Bishop of Chelmsford, to whose courageous initiative the Conference was due, presided throughout, and the members were deeply thankful for the strong ability, sound judgment, and spiritual power which marked his conduct of the proceedings. The true inspiration of his leadership was felt by all, and has been very handsomely acknow-

ledged, but he would be the last man to take any credit to himself ; his only feeling, we are persuaded, is one of deep and humble thankfulness to God that it has pleased Him thus to use His servant in bringing the Conference to so successful an issue.'

At the conclusion of the Conference the following resolution was proposed by the Dean of Canterbury, seconded by the Archbishop of Armagh, and carried unanimously :

'The clergy here present offer to the Bishop of Chelmsford their most grateful acknowledgments for the benefits he has conferred on them by summoning this Conference, and by the manner in which he has conducted it. They recognize the spirit of far-seeing and courageous churchmanship by which his action was prompted, and the deep spiritual wisdom and devotion by which his conduct of the discussion has been animated. They offer him also their cordial thanks for the generous hospitality with which he has entertained them. The Conference has been the means of much spiritual blessing to them, and they will always remember it with gratitude.'

In a letter dated December 1923, after the meeting of the General Committee of the Church Missionary Society, at which the future policy of the society had been enunciated, the bishop wrote the following :

'During the last few months many of us have been greatly distressed, and daily my thoughts and prayers have been turned to the dear old C.M.S. Just when a heart-broken world was needing the Saviour, and when men were giving, as never before, to send the Message of His Cross and Passion as sufficient to meet that need,

seeds of suspicion were sown, and men's minds and hearts were diverted from the attack upon the enemy at the Front to civil war at home. Still, some of us believed that the millions of prayers offered up during the last hundred years for the C.M.S. would avail much, and our faith was justified by the decision arrived at last week. The result was not a victory for this or that side. It was simply brought about by the Master Himself in our midst teaching us more of His will, and infusing into us more of His spirit. Thus we learned more fully not to assume that all our own special views, even upon Himself, were essential to true unity or faith in Him. We were made to realize that combined with a full faith in our Blessed Lord, truly God and truly Man, and in His atoning work upon the Cross, there was and is no reason why there could not be, and ought not to be, full liberty for varieties of views in other important though not vital matters. The C.M.S. stands by its old standards in all that is essential to a living faith in Christ, and for the prosecution of His work, but with sufficient freedom not to arrest but to permit and even to welcome all that modern scholarship can bring into the storehouse of the mind of the Christian. In the Faith is found the consummation and summit of all knowledge. Feeling this as I do, I trust that we may hear less and less of Evangelicals with a label.' . . . 'The C.M.S., in future even more than in the past, must be the glorious possession of all Evangelicals. So-called Conservatives and so-called Liberals must both alike bring into its storehouse their best gifts of money, prayer, scholarship, and spirituality, for surely this is the will of the Master.

'So I join in welcoming with all my heart the call to go forward in the power of the Holy Spirit to make the kingdoms of this world the Kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ.'

The reorganization of the diocese was occupying the bishop's serious attention during the latter part of 1921. On his consecration in 1914 he had as his episcopal colleagues Thomas Stevens, Bishop of Barking and Archdeacon of Essex, and Robert Henry Whitcombe, Bishop and Archdeacon of Colchester. In February 1919, Dr. Stevens resigned the Suffragan Bishopric of Barking, and in June of the same year James Theodore Inskip was consecrated to this office. On the death of Bishop Stevens on 22nd August, 1920, the Bishop of Barking became Archdeacon of Essex. In March 1922, the Archdeaconry of Essex was subdivided, one part taking the title of West Ham, whilst the second part became known as the Archdeaconry of Southend. Canon Percy M. Bayne, who had rendered yeoman service to the Church as Clerical Secretary of the London-over-the-Border Fund, became the first Archdeacon of Southend.

On 19th March 1922, the Bishop of Colchester passed to his rest, and Thomas Alfred Chapman was consecrated bishop on 24th June 1922.

Dr. Watts-Ditchfield never failed to acknowledge all that he owed to his episcopal colleagues. On the resignation of Dr. Stevens as Bishop of Barking, the bishop wrote in the *Diocesan Chronicle* for March 1919 :

‘ What the Church in Essex owes to him can never be fully realized nor adequately repaid, but the bishop may be assured that he and his work will never be forgotten, but that the memory of both will be a precious possession for all time, and will serve as an example to all of us day

by day. His intimate and wide knowledge of the diocese, his long and varied experience, his ripe judgment, were of inestimable value to me when I was appointed his colleague, and no one could have rendered me more loyal and devoted co-operation in the work than the bishop.'

On the death of Dr. Whitcombe, the bishop wrote thus in the *Diocesan Chronicle* for April 1922 :

' The Bishop of Colchester has gone " Home " after a brave and great fight. It is no light task to write of a colleague such as he was. Well do I remember our kneeling for the first time side by side in the vicarage at Bethnal Green. From that day onwards we gradually drew closer together, until the official relationship was lost in something stronger and closer, and my heart is sore this day as if I had lost a brother. His knowledge of affairs, his sane judgment and the gift of seeing, as Barnabas did, the grace of God, were of the greatest possible service to me. I cannot attempt here to speak of his work for the diocese. It is known to us all, and fruit in the future will reveal the quality of the seed he sowed and how well he sowed.'

It was with optimism that the bishop looked forward to the future when the results of the re-organization of the diocese would be seen in more effective service.

On 19th October 1922, an important event in the history of the diocese took place, when the Archbishop of Canterbury visited Chelmsford in order to dedicate the bishop's throne presented in memory of Bishop Johnson and Mrs. Johnson, and to dedicate the tablet placed in the cathedral

by the bishop to the memory of the chaplains and sons of clergy in the diocese who fell in the War. The diocese showed its recognition of the importance of the occasion and its appreciation of the honour conferred in the visit of the Primate by the representative congregation which assembled to join in the service. At the beginning of the sermon the archbishop said :

‘ It is to me at once a high privilege and a genuine satisfaction to stand here to-day as archbishop of the province, in response to the invitation of your bishop, and to take part in a service which is, I think, characteristic of the life of this diocese in its resources, its vigour, its character, and—shall I say ?—its originality—a service of singular pathos and historic significance. The fact that Chelmsford, with all its long record as a really ancient township, is modern as a cathedral city and diocese, gives point to what we are doing to-day. We are increasing and enriching its records in a very marked degree.

‘ I feel a sense of high responsibility in paying an official visit as Archbishop of Canterbury to a diocese so important in its social activity, so varied in its life, so resourceful at present in handling large problems, so successful, I should like to add, in meeting in some measure the perplexities common to us all. You are doing this under a leader about whom I can hardly, in his presence, say all I would fain say. You have now, in population and in effective work, a place in the front rank of the English dioceses.’

In November 1922, the bishop summoned a meeting of the cathedral Chapter and the rural deans to consider the advisability of holding a synod in the diocese. After much discussion it

was decided to hold a synod the following year, and a strong committee was appointed to carry out the arrangements as to place, time, and procedure. Such action did not come as a surprise to Church-people, for the bishop had taken a practical interest in this matter for some time past. In March 1921, he moved a resolution in the Upper House of Convocation, requesting the president to appoint a joint committee to consider and report upon the whole question of synods.

The bishop supported his resolution with many historical references, a course which called forth the commendation of the Bishop of Winchester, when he spoke in support of the motion. He also served as a member of the Committee of the Upper House of the Convocation of Canterbury, and as a member of the Joint Committee of both Houses which dealt with this important subject.

The bishop was anxious to make no mistake, and careful study was made of the whole subject, and the views of men of all schools of thought were sought for and obtained. To this careful and painstaking preparation much of the success of the Synod was due. Every detail was thought out and provided for. Thus, when assembled, the whole Synod moved to its successful conclusion with ease and an entire lack of friction.

It was the crowning event of his episcopal life so far as the diocese was concerned. No one could have attended the Synod without feeling profoundly impressed by the spiritual tone of

the speeches, the sincere devotion manifested by all to the Church, and the earnest desire for unity of spirit.

The following extracts from the *Church Times* of 25th May 1923, show the impression created in the minds of all who took part :

‘ The Bishop of Chelmsford has taken such an active part in the movement for the restoration of diocesan synods that it was natural that he should be amongst the first to act upon the recommendation of the Upper House of the Convocation of Canterbury, and to summon his clergy to meet him in synod. Over six hundred of the clergy of the diocese assembled in the cathedral on the Wednesday and Thursday in last week, when the Synod met to discuss questions submitted by the bishop on such important matters as Prayer Book Revision, Reservation, and Ecclesiastical Courts.

‘ When it was first intimated to the diocese that Prayer Book Revision and Reservation would be amongst the subjects submitted to the Synod for discussion there were those who felt that no good purpose would be served by discussing within the walls of the cathedral Church questions on which there is such a sharp cleavage of opinion within the Church. Whatever the fears that gave rise to this feeling, it is certain that they were dispelled by the actual discussions, for they revealed a measure of agreement on the main questions, and, on the whole, a temper and tone in controversy, that must have agreeably surprised those who feared that all the problems presented by the questions submitted would prove insoluble, and that an open discussion of them would prove acrimonious. This does not mean that either side gave way on matters of principle in order to preserve an outward show of unity, for on both sides those who spoke stated their views and wishes in no

uncertain terms. There was, however, a spirit of understanding abroad that ruled out any tendency to attack the views of the other side, or to question the honesty and earnestness of those who held them.

‘ It would be idle to pretend that no one transgressed, for at least one speech suggested a street-corner meeting of Mr. Kensit’s preachers, rather than a gathering of priests called together to take counsel together “for the furtherance of the most comfortable Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.” This was, however, the exception, and the way in which it was received by the Synod, irrespective of party views, served to accentuate the desire of all parties represented to get to understand one another better, and to discover what measure of agreement could be arrived at without sacrifice of principle. The result was that as the Synod progressed those on both sides saw the way to a measure of agreement on some points where hitherto they had considered such agreement outside of the realm of things practical. This desirable state of things was largely due to the bishop himself, for both in his handling of the subjects under discussion and in his conduct of the devotions of the Synod he maintained a high spiritual level, and created an atmosphere in keeping with the sacredness of the building, and the high purpose for which the Synod was assembled.

‘ THE OPENING SESSION

‘ With very few exceptions the whole of the clergy of the diocese were assembled in the cathedral when the bishop entered, attended by his suffragans, the members of the cathedral Chapter, and his honorary and domestic chaplains. As the procession passed up the nave the Litany was sung by the cantors, the clergy standing and joining in the responses. This was followed by

special prayers recited by the precentor of the cathedral, at the conclusion of which the bishop proceeded to the sanctuary, and standing before the High Altar led his clergy in a profession of their faith in the words of the Nicene Creed. The creed ended, the bishop with his suffragans and archdeacons proceeded to the dais, where they sat during the sessions.

‘Before the actual discussions opened the bishop reminded the Synod that it was assembled not with the idea of gaining an advantage for this party or that, but in order to discover how best to make the Church in the diocese effective for carrying on its work. Therefore he called upon its members to hear freely all sides, for in this way it was possible that each might see, even in what he believed to be the over-emphasis of his brother, some side of truth that he himself was neglecting. He paid a tribute to the contribution made to the truth by Anglo-Catholics and Evangelicals alike, and speaking of the former, said that they were strong in their faith, love, and devotion to our Blessed Lord, opposed to the mutilation of the Word of God, and that, like the Evangelicals, they made the Cross the centre of their faith and devotional life. He strongly deprecated the way in which members and organs of both parties sometimes spoke of those who differed from them, and expressed the hope that not one word would be spoken during the Synod that would be unworthy of the Spirit of Christ and the sacred building in which it was spoken, and yet at the same time that each would speak his mind manfully and courageously.’

‘On Thursday morning the most impressive act of the whole Synod took place, when the bishop and over five hundred of his clergy joined in a great service of Communion and Intercession, and prayed that the Synod might be so blessed that through its deliberations the Church might be preserved in the true faith, and in

Godly discipline. The bishop of the diocese was the celebrant, and he was assisted in the administration by his suffragans, the Archdeacon of Southend, the rector of the cathedral church, and Canons Galpin, Pelly, and Brunwin-Hales. The bishop celebrated at the High Altar, but the altar in the chapel, and an additional one erected for the occasion in the south aisle, were also used for the administration. The whole service was most inspiring and impressive, and those who took part in it felt that this great corporate act of Communion and Intercession alone more than justified the calling together of the Synod. Such services must of necessity be infrequent, and especially in a diocese like Chelmsford, where it is a day's journey to get from one part of it to another, but they are so helpful to the clergy themselves, and so calculated to strengthen the work of the Church, that the opportunity provided by a Synod for a service of this kind is in itself a strong argument for the restoration of the ancient custom.'

The singing of the *Te Deum* immediately preceding the Blessing was in reality a great corporate act of thanksgiving for the good Hand of our God upon us during the Synod. There was established a sense of mutual understanding, mutual fellowship, mutual loyalty to our Father in God, and a fervent desire to spend and be spent in the service of our Lord and Master.

To the bishop it was also the forging of one strong link in the chain of Reunion which ever occupied a prominent place in his life and thought.

Whilst Vicar of St. James-the-Less, Bethnal Green, he had arranged for a service to be held each year in the church grounds, in which the

ministers of the various denominations in the parish were invited to take part. In July 1908, the bishop arranged for a deputation, representative of Church life in London, to visit the Wesleyan Conference which held its meeting in the metropolis. The deputation was led by the Bishop of Stepney, who conveyed a message of greeting from the Bishop of London.

In company with the Bishop of London, he again visited the Wesleyan Conference in July 1917. As convener he presented, in 1919, the Report of the Joint Committee of the Houses of the Convocation of Canterbury on Co-operation on Christian Teaching and Prayer between Church-people and Nonconformists. In December 1919, at the invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury, he became a member of a special sub-committee, consisting of three bishops and three Nonconformists, to draw up a scheme for a Christian Social Council, and in October 1921, at the invitation of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, he consented to be one of six bishops who were to meet the Nonconformist delegates for counsel concerning the Lambeth Appeal and Reunion.

Early in 1922 a letter of greeting was sent by the bishop to the congregation of a Nonconformist chapel within the diocese, who were commemorating the twenty-fifth year of the ministry of their pastor. The following reply shows the spirit in which such kindly acts were received: 'I cannot express the gratitude I and my people feel, at the receipt of your *most* kindly

letter of greeting, at my semi-jubilee in this church. Forgive my saying so, but gracious acts like these do more to help Nonconformists to honour the historic episcopate than hours of debate. They pave the way for the Reunion of the Churches in a most effective way. May God ever bless and prosper your great and responsible work in this part of England. We follow you with our prayers.' Thus in conference with Nonconformists, and by the establishment of friendly relations wherever possible, the bishop sought to create the atmosphere which was essential to Reunion. Nor was it only with our Nonconformist brethren that he wished to establish sympathetic understanding. In April 1923, the bishop sent a letter of sympathy, on behalf of the C.E.M.S., to our brethren of the Russian Orthodox Church. At the same time he proposed a resolution which received the unanimous support of the C.E.M.S., requesting those in authority in our own country, and in the countries of our Allies in the War, to do all that was possible to relieve the misery caused by the persecution in Russia. This was forwarded to the leaders of all parties in our own Parliament and to the ambassadors of our Allies. Letters of warm appreciation were received by the bishop from Metropolitan Eulogios in the name of the Patriarch Tikhon, and from Metropolitan Anthony, the President of the Russian Episcopal Synod abroad. But the bishop laboured under no delusion. He realized that unity of spirit within the Church was essential to reunion with

our brethren of other communions. Speaking at the London Diocesan Conference in May 1908, when the question of vestments was the cause of controversy, he said :

‘No Act of Parliament, nor Decree of Convocation, would ever settle the question. If it were to be settled for the advancement of the glory of God and the strengthening of His Church, it could only be attained by the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit. Let us have a truce of God, and let the voice of controversy be stilled for a whole year, whilst men of all schools of thought learn in the Presence of God that unity of spirit which would revitalize the Church.’

It was this fervent desire for unity of spirit within the Church that inspired his Presidential Address at the Southend Church Congress in 1920. Now in his Diocesan Synod it had been shown that men of widely divergent views, meeting in the spirit of prayer, and submitting themselves to the guidance of the Holy Ghost, could realize that unity of spirit which is essential for the successful prosecution of the Church’s mission. To bring this spirit into the wider sphere of the Church, the bishop wrote the following letter to the editor of the *Times*, which was published on 28th May 1923 :

‘We are face to face with a situation in the English Church unparalleled since the Reformation. The controversies in the early days of the Tractarians or around the Vestment were insignificant in comparison with that in which we are engaged at the present time. Yet the situation is by no means hopeless if met by prayer, faith, and courage.

‘ Between the two great parties, Evangelicals and Anglo-Catholics, there is the larger body of Church-people not openly identified with either, but simply loyal Anglicans eager and anxious to fulfil their tasks in peace. It would be untrue to suggest, however, that either of the two wings, Evangelical or Anglo-Catholic, is composed entirely or even largely of unreasonable men, incapable of making any effort to meet each other’s desires or demands. The out-and-out irreconcilables are exceedingly few in number. A variety of circumstances, into which I must not enter, have caused numbers of men, spiritual and loyal, to become so entangled in various more or less illegal acts that apparently lawlessness has become the rule rather than the exception. I believe the overwhelming majority of the clergy desire ardently a real attempt at a settlement of our outstanding difficulties, which, while generous and comprehensive, would be loyal to the fundamental principles of the Reformation. Can an attempt be made to meet their desires? I think that it can, and I believe the time to be ripe for such an attempt. Briefly let me state the position :—

‘ 1. The nation needs salvation, using the word in its broadest sense. This is so apparent that I need not dwell upon this point.

‘ 2. Whilst gladly recognizing the splendid spiritual work done by the Free Churches, a lead for a great aggressive spiritual movement ought to be given by the Church of England at this time if the Church of Christ is to fulfil her great mission.

‘ 3. Such a lead is impossible while the present condition of affairs continues within her borders.

‘ I think these three propositions would be endorsed by every spiritual leader to-day. The position in the

country and the world demands a militant, united, and spiritual Church of England. Is it not time that the whole Church, realizing that she is, from a human point of view, in danger of being overwhelmed by her foes as the nation did in 1914, should follow the example of the nation at that time and concentrate rather upon overthrowing her foes than upon civil war within her own borders? The outstanding reason which prevents her doing so is the lack of either authority or discipline. There never can be peace within her borders, or aggressiveness without, while anarchy prevails and no authority is recognized and discipline is flouted. Order must be restored, but how?

‘May I suggest two ways, both suggested by the two main causes which have brought the Church to the unhappy condition in which she is to-day? As the Ecclesiastical Report of 1906 plainly indicates, a time had arrived for a revision of the Prayer Book and a reform of Ecclesiastical Courts. Since that time the Church has attempted the one but not the other. With regard to the former, leaving out smaller, but by no means unimportant questions, the two great difficulties unsolved are those connected with the Canon and Reservation. I do not minimize the difficulties connected with these questions. They are great, for both are connected with doctrinal questions of the front rank; but the discussion in my recent Synod has convinced me that they are not incapable of solution provided that men can meet together with a will and a mind to be guided and directed to a solution by the working of the Holy Spirit.

‘I am encouraged to write this letter, for I believe that I am the spokesman of tens of thousands of Christian folk found in every section of the Church who say: “We be brethren, let us meet at the feet of Him whom we all equally call our Lord and our God, and let Him

tell us what He would have us do." I suggest this or some similar method should be adopted before discussing further the Canon in our Constitutional Assemblies. A fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit can alone heal our divisions and make us one.'

CHAPTER XI

THE MAN HIMSELF

‘THE man was greater than his work.’ He was able to accomplish so much, because of what he was. Transparently sincere, he possessed throughout life the natural simplicity of a child. Thus the impressions made upon his mind were clearly seen. When pleased, he showed his pleasure; when disappointed, his disappointment was manifest; when hurt, his pain was evident. His weakness and failure were as apparent as his strength and success. There was nothing hidden in his life that could not be revealed to the world. His manifest pleasure when he was able to give pleasure, his apparent joy when he had been enabled to help, were sometimes mistaken for self-confidence. The extracts from his diary already quoted, and the following extracts, show his humility of spirit :

‘*17th September 1914.* My birthday. My first as a bishop. What a wonderful year has just closed, but what a task awaits me ! My heart has been much touched to-day. I have received many telegrams, many presents, and scores of letters, some from the diocese, some from friends, but mostly from *the* parish. The touching words of love have moved me greatly, the more so as many refer to blessings received.

' My appointments are causing me great anxiety. " Lord, guide me to send whom Thou wouldest send," then all will be well.

' Now I have to face the coming year. " Lord, what wilt *Thou* have me to do ? " I do want to be a spiritual force, but am I spiritual ? I feel over and over again Romans vii. represents me, and yet the words of the last verse are mine also, " I thank God through Jesus Christ," He who has all authority and power is with me. I want to—

' 1. *Live the life of Christ.*

' 2. Lead the clergy nearer to Him to enable them the better to realize their privilege and their responsibility.

' 3. To lead the Church to " win Essex for Christ."

' Who is sufficient for these things ? I must find more time for private communion. I have not been so close as I ought to have been. I have allowed the work to suffer by not consecrating it in private to Him. " Lord, I will try to do better. Help Thou me, Lord." '

' 1st January 1916. " Bless me, even me, O Father. Thou hast raised me for something. Let me not frustrate Thee. Use me. Empty me of self. Fill me with Thyself." '

' 1st January 1920. Thank God for something new—a fresh start—a new year. As to myself I want, if God wills, to live for the sake of my loved ones, and the work. That is all. God is All in All to me, and Christ is precious. I long to see a great revival of true religion in our midst. I am thankful to God for the growing love of many of the clergy and laity of the diocese. Amid everything that may have been done badly or by mistaken means, I have tried to be of use.

' God grant me greater power, greater wisdom, greater love, and greater keenness.'

Although so sensitive that harsh criticism crushed him, the bishop welcomed and encouraged kindly criticism. He sought advice and counsel, not merely from those who were in agreement with him, but from those who disagreed with his interpretation of the truth, or his line of action. He did not hesitate to seek for information from any competent authority. Books and newspapers were obtained, and read carefully, on subjects of controversy by men of all schools of thought and shades of opinion, in order that he might understand, as fully as possible, every aspect of the truth. Though at times he appeared to be dogmatic, he was ever ready to acknowledge the reasonableness of another interpretation, if such were proved to be in accordance with truth. Characteristically English, he could be drawn by the cords of love, but no force could drive him. He strove to live in accordance with the Christian principle, 'Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.' Peculiarly sensitive to any expression of harshness, injustice, or ill will, he was more than considerate towards the feelings of others. Rather than wound the feelings of others he preferred to be thought weak. Therein lay the greatness of the man. He loved his fellow-man, and he craved for the love of his fellow-man.

In his own home life the bishop was simple and unaffected. His love for his wife and child was wondrous, and his devotion to both was inspiring to those who were privileged to witness it. The love of both to him was a precious

possession. In the storehouse of his memory, a simple incident connected with his daughter's childhood years occupied a sacred place. A drawer in his desk was reserved for sweets, and this his child knew. One day the child entered her father's study, and the father asked, 'What do you want, darling?' There was no response. 'Would you like a sweet?' reaching down to open the drawer. 'No, daddy,' came the reply. 'Well, what do you want?' 'Nothing, daddy.' And then, as the father sat the child upon his knee, she added, 'I just came to see you.'

Throughout life he never failed to keep a promise made to his child, and the child had absolute and implicit faith in the father. One afternoon, as he was going to an important meeting in the city, she asked him to bring home some trivial thing, and the father promised to do so. The business upon which he was engaged called forth his undivided attention, and the request was forgotten. He had almost reached the vicarage gate when he recalled his promise. Tired as he was, he went straight back to London, so that he should not fail the child.

The same love was bestowed upon his two grandchildren. It was a pleasing sight to watch the bishop playing with his grandson, John, on the lawn at Bishops-court, or to see him walking round the garden with the child's little hand in his own. When the younger child was five weeks old, he had to undergo a serious operation in a London nursing home. The bishop had been ill, and literally rose from his sick-bed in order to

be present with his daughter and her husband in the home during the operation. With the care of a large diocese, and with all his responsible duties, nothing was so important on that occasion as the welfare of his loved ones. It was all so simple and unaffected, and done in such a kindly and spontaneous manner, that the bishop never knew that it was anything but the most natural thing in the world. He could not have acted otherwise.

The love of husband and wife is far too sacred to deal with in these pages, but it does not require much imagination to understand the beauty and nobility of such a love. The dedication of his first published work, *Fishers of Men*, gives some impression of this :

‘TO MY WIFE

WHO HAS COUNTED IT NOT DEAR TO SACRIFICE
MUCH OF THE COMFORT OF HER OWN HOME LIFE, IF
ONLY MEN MIGHT BE WON TO GOD, AND SO THE HOMES
OF HER SISTERS BE MADE THE HAPPIER.’

It was a source of deep regret to him that his wife's health did not permit her to enter as fully into his public life and work as otherwise would have been possible. Wherever he went, the photographs of his loved ones always accompanied him, and many were the people who were familiar with them, although they had never actually met them in life.

Neither he nor his wife was selfish in regard to their home life. ‘Given to hospitality’ was

true of him, both as vicar and bishop. The vicarage was home to one and all of the staff of St. James-the-Less. The front door of the vicarage was never locked till late in the evening, and the members of the staff went in and out as they wished. It was a privilege to enter such a family parish, and no one who shared the privilege will ever forget the love and comradeship of those Bethnal Green days. The vicar was affectionately known to his colleagues as 'Daddy.' The workers' meetings, in spite of long and tedious business, were a joy to attend. When something had been left undone, it was 'You naughty boy,' in affectionate remonstrance. All lived at their best, for they were impelled by the most effective driving force in the world, the compelling power of love. It is impossible to give an adequate description of the vicar's birthday. The whole parish, as a great happy family, joined in the festival. His colleagues laughingly said that the greatest day of the year in Bethnal Green was St. J. E. W. D.'s Day. In 1912, when the vicar was in Australia, the parishioners, to the number of about twelve hundred, gathered as usual in the evening of this happy day in the large hall, and were astonished and delighted beyond measure to hear their vicar's voice, saying, 'From the far ends of the world I greet you.' His birthday message, spoken in Australia, was delivered to his people by means of the gramophone. Such an incident was characteristic of his thoughtfulness for others. There was a sense of loss when he became bishop, for the

happy family life of the Bethnal Green days could be no more, although the same spirit came to dominate the life of the diocese on a much wider scale.

His own parental love made him tender towards the love of other parents. On his C.E.M.S. tour many were the visits paid to sons and relatives overseas, so that he might report to their loved ones in the old country.

Bishopscourt in War time was a joy to behold. Privates from Bethnal Green, officers of high rank stationed in the county, lonely boys from our Dominions, and the wounded from the local hospital, were entertained with kindly hospitality.

The humanity of the bishop made its own appeal. He always seemed to understand, and to enter into, the feelings of others in the varying circumstances of life. Grateful for the love expressed on his birthday, or on the other anniversaries of the great events of his life, he was mindful of similar days in the lives of others. Each morning his birthday book was produced, and never a day passed without his writing one or more letters of greeting to some of his friends. After the death of the bishop, a friend of his boyhood said he would miss those annual greetings. Never since those early days had the bishop failed to send such greetings. In his diary of 19th September 1914 is written :

‘ It is the Bishop of Barking’s birthday. I wired and wrote to him. No man is more highly respected in Essex than he. He has been a real father to me—grand. I do thank God for him and Colchester.’

The present Bishop of Colchester, preaching at a memorial service to the bishop, spoke of this thoughtfulness for others as an outstanding trait in his character, and said that on the anniversary of his Consecration he had received only one letter, and that was from the Bishop of Chelmsford. In the hour of sadness and sorrow he was equally thoughtful. The following extracts from letters written in such circumstances give an impression of the bishop's mind :

‘ I am exceedingly sorry to hear of your great and sudden loss. If I had known of your husband's illness I would certainly have come to see him. I know how feeble human words must be at a time like this, yet I would like you to realize how highly we thought of his life and work. I have heard from many of his influence in the parish, and beyond its borders. You have his memory, a most treasured possession, but you have the joy of knowing he has *not* finished his life, nor his service. He has only altered his sphere. “ His servants shall serve Him,” and your husband will now be continued in fellowship and in service. What a joy to think he and you are both in the *same* Church, with the same Father and Redeemer ! Yet I know the parting must mean much to you and your children, and I do pray that the Great Comforter may comfort you and bless you in the time of trial and sorrow.

‘ With much thankfulness for his life, and sympathy with you and a real God bless you.’

‘ Just a line to say how I have been with you and your husband in thought and in prayer during the last few days. I know how at such a time as this human words must seem very poor things, but you know your

boy is not dead. There has grown upon me the fuller meaning of life—it is not the puny thing of even seventy or eighty years lived on earth amid all kinds of limitations, but something very large and great. “I believe in the life everlasting,” and this your boy is enjoying and will enjoy. For him we can have no regrets. He will thrive, and grow, and develop, as he never could at Eton or Harrow. He is in the best of homes, and the best of schools. God is the Father of his home, and Christ the Head of his school, so he *is* provided with all he needs. Yet hearts are human, and I know how you and your husband must feel the loss, and so I pray that the great Comforter may comfort your hearts and give you His peace. God bless you both.’

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‘I am writing a brief line to say that my thoughts and prayers will be with you to-morrow and on Monday. It scarcely seems possible that a year has rolled by since he went “Home.” What a year he has had! The greatest, the most wonderful of all years, for he has been nearer to his Lord and lived, *really* lived, in the presence of his King. For him it has been all rest, all peace, all growth, and what more delightful than his experience! This is the joy we can have, that we rejoice in his joy. But we also can remember his life on earth, so happy, so unselfish, and so devoted. I hear still, wherever I go, his name on people’s lips, and his life and work never forgotten.

‘I know the year has been one of trial to you, but his Lord and Saviour has been with you, and He will lead you, step by step, to your loved one, and also to Himself. That in the meantime comfort and strength may be given to you, is the prayer of . . .’

The impression created in the minds of those

who received such letters is to be found in the following extract :

‘ I cannot let the day pass without writing to thank you for your kind sympathy and prayers. In the midst of my distress my heart goes out to you in the warmest appreciation of your kindly thought of me in my sorrow, when you have so much that demands your care and attention. I feel very deeply that you have proved yourself a true Father in God to me. Sympathy, true sympathy like yours, is a real stay and comfort to bereaved hearts, because it reminds us of the Divine Sympathy. If man can feel sympathy for his fellow-man, how much more must the Divine Heart of Love have compassion on poor stricken hearts ! ’

In cases of distress, such expressions of sympathy were accompanied by a practical sign of their sincerity. Those who were assisted in this way, both in the Bethnal Green days, and in the wider sphere of diocesan life, were numerous indeed. So quietly, tactfully, and unostentatiously were such acts performed that they were known only to the donor and the recipient. Many are they who can thank God for the generous thoughtfulness of their vicar and bishop. The following extract is from a letter of acknowledgment of one such act :

‘ MY DEAR LORD BISHOP,—Your dear, kind letter reached me this morning and touched me more deeply than I can say. Nor do I know how I can ever begin to express my great gratitude for your most extremely generous gift. I can only say from the very bottom of my heart what you say to me : which is, “ God bless you.” ’

It was ever a joy to him to commend work well done, and his expressions of gratitude and appreciation for services rendered showed his generosity of spirit. The following letter is characteristic of this :

‘ MY DEAR RECTOR,—It is with deep regret that I accept your resignation, and yet, I think you are doing right. But I know what this must mean to you. Your life and love have been given to your church and parish for the sake of your Lord, and it must be no light task for you to relinquish work which has really become your life. You have, however, the memory of the past, and, above all, *hope* for future service. That is the joy, “ His servants shall serve Him,” and so after all you are not now *ceasing* your labours, but only resting before undertaking the next work of your Lord. You will have time for that. I thank God for all He has done in you and through you, and pray that you may be blessed abundantly day by day.’

The record of names to be found in his ‘ Book of Remembrance ’ was catholic in its scope, including, as it did, those who occupied the highest positions in Church and State, and those whose friendship had been won in the humbler spheres of life ; those who were the great masters of industry, and those who earned their daily bread by manual toil ; those who in the crowded cities of empire served their day and generation, and those who in the country village of the homeland, or in the outposts of empire, made their contribution to the common weal. In its pages were to be found the aged pilgrim, drawing near to the end of life’s journey, the young traveller,

just stepping over the threshold of life, and they who, in the full vigour of manhood and womanhood, were living in the noontide of life, rich and poor alike, each name occupying a space peculiarly its own. The expression of such remembrance made a heavy demand on time and thought, and encroached considerably upon the hours of rest, but who can estimate the amount of good done in this quiet, unobtrusive manner ?

Extremely loath to correct or rebuke, he endeavoured to discharge this duty conscientiously, but in such a kindly spirit, that it left no resentment, but gratitude and fresh endeavour in its train. Writing to one who was dear to him on the anniversary of the passing of his loved one, he says :

‘ I know that to-morrow will carry you back to a year ago. It is natural and right that it should do so, but I beg of you to take a big view of life. Do you, can you, begrudge your loved one a happy year, happier than the happiest spent on earth ? for that is what the last year has meant to her. This is the ray of sunshine for you. . . . Do you think that she would like to think that her love to you, and yours to her, is spoiling your life, instead of ennobling and enriching it, and making it more useful to God and His Church ? To-day England wants every force to help her through. Now, my dear old —, with all my love to you, and full of sympathy for your great loss, I do ask you to make an effort to throw yourself into the things of life more and to get back to Church work. The effort will be great, but ask for help, seek it even to-morrow, and live the life she would have you do. I shall think of you, and pray for you. God bless and comfort, and above all, lead you in His way.’

On the receipt of a letter asking to be appointed to a living of which he was patron, the bishop writes :

‘ I have received your letter, but forgive my saying that I always deprecate any priest seeking a post for himself. I think it does away with any idea of a Call from God. . . . “ The steps of the good are ordered by the Lord.” If once a man begins to think that he, and not his Master, is to decide where he shall go, then I think that the spiritual influence which he ought to wield deteriorates. Forgive my writing thus, but I do it in all kindness. I sympathize to the full with you, and, as you know, took some little part in helping you a short time ago. But I have seen so many lives of the clergy deteriorate through seeking for themselves a new sphere, and always for a higher income, that it distresses me when I see any one for whom I have any regard walking in that direction.’

The bishop showed much concern in any change of sphere in the lives of his clergy, and more particularly of the younger clergy. Time was found to discuss a proposed change with his clergy, so that they might understand fully the significance of it, and its bearing on their future life and ministry. His concern, and yet his fatherly correction, are to be seen in the following letter to one who was leaving the diocese :

‘ I am writing to you in strict confidence, but I think that after our interview and prayer together, you might have written and told me you were going, and where you were going, and not leave me to find it out from other sources. However, let that pass.

‘ I am writing to you seriously. I wish I could have

seen you before you left, because it is so much easier to say than to write. In correspondence one is so apt to be misunderstood. I believe that at heart you are sound and good. I believe that you really want to be of use in the Kingdom of God, and to win souls for Christ. In other words, I believe in you. At the same time, I fear that unless you are careful you are going to wreck your ministerial career and your usefulness in the ministry. This will be the sixth change in ten years. I do not blame you entirely for this. Others may have had a share of the blame, but it is unsatisfactory. I would like you to spend an hour alone, and think out your ministerial career in each of the parishes in which you have served, not with a view of saying that you were badly treated by this vicar and that vicar, but rather to examine your own life and actions. Have I been moody? Have I given cause for people to think me discourteous? Have I been gentle and kind and patient? Have I in the pulpit sought to win men rather than to denounce men? Have I got full control of my temper, and is Jesus able to save me from that and all other sins? Have I prayed daily for my ministerial colleagues that they and I might understand each other and appreciate each other more? These are some of the questions which I would like you to face upon your knees. I am writing in love. I do not think it is too late for you to make a real start again. It will not do for this kind of thing to go on. I do beg and pray of you to watch yourself as you have never watched yourself before, and to pray for others connected with your work as you have never prayed for them.'

Writing to one of his clergy on the question of 'open' churches, he says :

'Thank you for your letter, but I fear that your explanation is one which I can scarcely consider satisfactory. It is quite true, for instance, that St. Paul's

Cathedral and other places make a charge for persons who wish to visit certain parts of the cathedral or church, but that is a very different thing from making a charge for entrance into the sacred building itself. There are many people who wish to find a quiet place for silent prayer and meditation. To say that the caretaker will allow persons to enter who wish to pray is in itself an indication of a wrong spirit. The caretaker should have nothing whatever to do with such a matter. People ought to be free to come and go as they wish in the House of God in their own parish. For over seventeen years my own church was open at Bethnal Green, and I never had any one to watch it. During the whole time there was no damage done, with the exception of one Bank Holiday when a stranger broke open the alms-box. . . . I do not want to disserve myself from you in this matter, but, frankly, I cannot go on overlooking what I feel to be almost a scandal, that in the midst of a great working-class area, the parish church should not be open to parishioners, and I would most earnestly ask you to devise means by which the church can be open.'

In asking men to undertake a definite sphere of work, he emphasized the fact that the spiritual should always come first, and that, as he was striving to act in accordance with the mind and will of God, so their decision must be made in the same spirit. The following is an extract from a letter offering a priest his first vicariate :

'I want you to weigh the matter very carefully. Remember that, after all, you must hear the Voice bidding you go. It is only so that you may hope to be successful, for it will not be by might, nor by power, but by His Spirit that you will really be successful. If I had my ministry to begin again, I should go for *souls* more than

ever. Nothing else *really* matters. The temptation to do other things is great—very great—but, remember, you are ordained to do the work of Him who died that men might live.

‘The parish will tax you to the utmost. You will have to concentrate upon it, and give yourself wholly to it. It is full of possibilities of success, or of failure. It will either make, or spoil and hinder your future ministry. It will depend on one thing, as to whether you keep to the *One* Message, and whether you live it out in your life. Therein lies success or failure.

‘May God guide you, and fill you with His Spirit.’

The following extracts are from a letter to a priest, asking him to undertake the duties of a rural dean :

‘I am writing to ask you to accept the position of Rural Dean of ——. It is a position of much responsibility, and, in the future, this is likely to be increased. It will require great self-restraint, and the cultivation of wise leadership. I cannot hope that you will avoid all mistakes, but I am assured of your desire to avoid them. You will have to watch carefully lest you take too many people into your confidence. In such a position you must learn to suffer fools gladly. In meetings it is never wise to be smart at the expense of any member, however foolish he may be, if it is likely to leave a sore feeling in its train. Private interviews and personal considerations will carry you a long way. . . . Above all, remember that it is only a life lived in the spirit of your gentle and forgiving Saviour that can make your work of real and lasting value. I thank God for what He has enabled you to do in His service. I know that it will not make you self-confident, or self-assertive, but will humble you before God. For who are you, and who am I, that He should call either of us to co-operate with Him?’

From his youth he took an active interest in politics, being a Liberal by conviction. In his diary for 1880 we read :

‘ About this time the General Election occurred. This made me very busy indeed, for I worked very heartily and earnestly for the Liberal candidates, and Mr. Gladstone, who is my favourite English statesman, past or present. I was delighted when our candidates were returned.’

At the conclusion of the election, he was elected honorary secretary of the committee brought into being for the erection of a Liberal Club in Patricroft. He had the satisfaction of seeing the club erected, and afterwards opened on 18th September 1880. Elected first honorary secretary to the club, he retained this post till his departure from the district in 1884. A keen student of politics, he retained throughout life his Liberal convictions, though he would never allow himself to become a slave to party politics. He was always prepared to support a measure produced by any party which, in his judgment, was for the good of the nation, or for the social betterment of the people. He watched with sympathy the rise of the Labour Party, and much in its programme appealed to him. He took a practical interest in the Education Bill of 1902, and also that of 1906. He was opposed to the Welsh Disestablishment Bill, and was one of the speakers at the great protest meeting in Hyde Park on 21st June 1913.

But he believed that the Gospel of Jesus Christ

was the greatest force in the world, and that the future prosperity of the nation and of the world lay in its preaching, therefore the programme of each political party must be based on its teaching. The Church must alienate none, but must strive, in the spirit of her Lord, to leaven all. His mature judgment was that the Church's duty was to enunciate principles, and not to frame political programmes. Writing to one of his clergy who had taken an active part in the election campaign in 1922, he says :

‘ I am writing with a sincere desire to help you. I honestly think that you were within your rights, as a citizen, to go and speak at any political meeting you wish, but on these matters we want to remember the great apostolic injunction, “ All things are lawful to me, but all things are not expedient.” . . . We want every type of man to come into the Church, whether he be Conservative, Liberal, or Labour, to receive instruction in the principles of the Christian Faith, and as to how these can be applied to every detail of international, national, and private life. If, however, the idea is prevalent that the man in the pulpit has a political bias, what he says is discounted by his political views. If a man has supported the Conservative candidate on the public platform, the average Liberal or Labour person coming into his church would not be so ready to hear what he had to say on the relation of the Sermon on the Mount to industrial problems as if the preacher had not spoken on that platform. Honestly I think that we can best serve the great Cause that we have at heart by standing outside all political parties, and yet influencing all by the preaching of the Gospel.

‘ I am writing this in view of your possible removal to another diocese.’

In thus expressing his opinion on the active participation of the clergy in party politics, the bishop fully realized the Church's duty in connexion with the great moral problems connected with the welfare of the nation. On the question of reprisals in Ireland, the bishop forwarded a letter to the Prime Minister, which was published in the *Times* of 6th April 1921, signed by himself and five of his episcopal colleagues, together with the leaders of the Nonconformist bodies. The *Times*, in a leading article of its issue on 20th April 1921, comments thus :

‘ It was not a document which any Prime Minister could ignore. Writing in their official capacities the signatories protested gravely and deliberately against aspects of our national policy in regard to Ireland which, in their eyes, appeared reprehensible on moral grounds. They associated themselves with the censure of the practice of indiscriminate and unauthorized reprisals which the Archbishop of Canterbury had already pronounced in the House of Lords “ on the highest of all grounds—namely the absolute unlawfulness of the attempt to overcome wrong, however flagrant and provocative, by means of further and equally indefensible wrong.” They appealed for the adoption of a different line of policy, and they pleaded with the Government to arrange a truce. They also pointed out that perhaps the heaviest condemnation of the present policy of the Government “ lies in the deepening alienation it is steadily effecting between this country and all classes of the Irish people.” Few who read their weighty pronouncement can have doubted the sincerity of purpose that inspired it, or can have failed to realize that the

writers were actuated by a sense of their moral responsibility alone and had freed themselves entirely from political considerations. Their meaning was transparent.'

In the *Times* of 6th May 1921 appeared the following :

'The Bishop of Chelmsford and other bishops and religious leaders of Nonconformist Churches who joined in his protest against the Irish policy of the Government, have replied to the letter which the Prime Minister addressed to them on 19th April. The matter could scarcely have rested where it was, for Mr. Lloyd George had charged them with practically condoning Sinn Fein outrages in Ireland. Needless to say they have found no difficulty in refuting so baseless an accusation, or in making their position doubly clear by urging Sinn Fein "to desist from and to secure the total suppression of vile deeds which are an offence against God and man." They also reply unhesitatingly to Mr. Lloyd George's challenge that they should define to the people of Ireland their position in regard to the conditions of settlement which he had laid down. The Prime Minister had based his defence upon the ground that Ireland demanded a republic. The Bishop of Chelmsford and his co-signatories answer that, while they hold a republic impracticable, and take it as agreed that Ulster is not to be coerced, a settlement is, in their view, attainable within those limits. They are opposed to the restriction of negotiation by limiting conditions beforehand, but they say that, until an attempt to achieve an accommodation has been "deliberately and patiently tried and has failed, many throughout the land will be unable to acquiesce in any alternative policy or course of action." It is a sound and practical answer, and will commend itself to the growing body of opinion which, even in the

Conservative Party, realizes that the Government's policy has, in the bishop's words, only succeeded in "inflaming the wound it was meant to heal."

The Prime Minister, in a speech at Portmadoc, criticized the action of the Church in this matter, and sought to define her attitude in regard to politics. To this speech 'the Bishop of Chelmsford made an effective reply at St. Paul's, Covent Garden,' on 21st June 1921, as the *Westminster Gazette* for that day narrates :

'Plunging quickly into his subject, which he prefaced with a sympathetic reference to the burden of responsibility borne by the Prime Minister, for whom he bespoke their prayers and sympathy, the bishop said that frankly they could not accept Mr. Lloyd George's ruling. If he had said that the Church must not interfere in party politics they could agree partly, if not entirely. Politics referred to the art and science of government, and government touched human life at every point. Was the Church to have no voice with respect to that which touched every one of its members in a vital degree? Every organization was to express its opinion, but the Church must not. . . . The bishop admitted the dangers of interference with politics; but he remarked you cannot divorce religion and politics without doing injury to both. The province of the Church was not to draw up programmes so much as to proclaim the form on which their programmes must be based. But when the principles of Christianity which they held were violated in the government of the nation, were they to be silent? . . . Now, the Prime Minister said the Church must content itself with creating the right atmosphere. "I agree," said the bishop, "but what shall we do if the Government is poisoning the atmosphere by the action

they are taking ? ” . . . In conclusion, he declared that the Church was more determined than ever to denounce local authorities that permitted slums, legislation that permitted sweating, and to proclaim the truth that righteousness exalteth a nation.’

Heredity and early environment ordained that his spiritual life should grow and develop on Evangelical lines. As the years passed, and his experience ripened, so his convictions became more firmly established on the Evangelical aspect of the truth. Whilst believing firmly in this school of thought, and realizing the necessity for such schools of thought within the Church, he became more and more opposed to anything in the nature of partisanship. His attitude on these matters is clearly expressed in a letter written three months before his death :

‘ It is because I am more and more convinced that we are playing the devil’s game by discussing things which, if there were no world to save, would be important, that I shun controversy more and more. This is why some of my friends think that I am a “ heretic,” but it is simply because I am trying to follow my Master and get to the things that really make for the salvation of souls. . . . I shall do all I possibly can to build up the Church of Christ, remembering that time is short and that controversy provokes, whereas the Gospel unites.’

He believed that the Church had been entrusted by God with that which alone could solve the problems and cure the ills of life, and that her fundamental duty was the proclamation of the Gospel. It was this big outlook on the mission

of the Church that enabled him to obviate any party dissension and strife within his own diocese. His appointment, as a pronounced Evangelical, to the Bishopric of Chelmsford was the cause of anxiety to many of the clergy in the diocese, the majority of whom did not think along Evangelical lines. Those who knew the man realized that such anxiety was without foundation. The development of his mind in these matters could be seen in his public utterances during the years immediately preceding his consecration. Many of his clergy were assured by his Presidential Address at the First Diocesan Conference held at Chelmsford on 27th October 1914, from which the following extracts are taken :

‘ I am fully prepared to recognize diversity in uniformity. It would be a fatal mistake to narrow the legitimate, comprehensive character of the Church of England. The High Churchman, the Evangelical, and the Broad Churchman have each their place within her borders, and each has made no light contribution to her character, position, and usefulness ; but, unless we are prepared to accept the views of, say, the late W. T. Stead, and have a Church with no boundaries at all, but free and open to all comers no matter what their belief and practice may be, we must have diversity within limitations.’ . . .

‘ I would earnestly appeal to any incumbent who may be considering the matter with a view to the introduction of incense, carefully to weigh over the authoritative decision and opinions in this matter, and would also suggest that he should seek an interview with me, when we can discuss the question.’ . . .

‘ With regard to vestments. For many years I have

been a keen advocate for revision of the Prayer Book on sane Church lines, but, if possible, I have been keener still on a thorough reform of our Ecclesiastical Courts. The present position is unsatisfactory and intolerable. By our system, or lack of system, the law is brought into disrepute. Many men who are loyal at heart are deemed lawless, and party passions are aroused and the work of the Church is hindered. At present the legal position is that vestments are declared to be unlawful. Convocation has the matter under consideration. The position is peculiar and difficult for both bishop and clergy. I feel that while I cannot sanction their use, conscientiously feeling as I do that they are illegal, and further that, speaking generally, their introduction does not tend to that simplicity of worship which is, in my opinion, so helpful to spiritual worship, yet I cannot and will not alienate myself from clergy who for years have worn them; but I must make it perfectly clear that I cannot under any circumstances sanction or permit their introduction into any church until a definite decision on the question has been made by Convocation in answers to the Letters of Business. In adopting this course, I am only following the lines laid down by the Bishop of St. Albans in asking clergy and people to wait patiently until Convocation has completed its labours. It may seem a long process, but the question is an important one, and ten or twelve years is but a small period in the life of a Church. Surely it savours of presumption on the part of either priest or bishop to attempt to anticipate the deliberate judgment of Convocation. Any form of government is better than anarchy.

‘On all these questions I want to be the true Father in God rather than a father-in-law. I trust that the diocese has already realized that I do not wish to approach these questions in any narrow party spirit, but

rather in the spirit of generous toleration and with sympathetic interest.' . . .

'Here let me say that I sincerely hope that it will never be said that I reprove a man who burns incense and remain silent to the man who denies the Virgin-birth, questions the truth of the Atonement, and whose teaching on the Resurrection is simply that it has no foundation in fact, but is a spiritual parable. To such a man I can show no toleration whatever. Let him pursue his investigation outside the ministry, for in it he has no place nor right. The Creed must be believed by the priest who recites it; the statements contained therein must be regarded as historical facts and not as parables. I am thankful that my first vote and speech in Convocation were in support of the resolution proposed by the Bishop of London on this important question.

'Some may be disappointed, some may be distressed at my words, but I would ask you all to believe this day that I have only one object, to do the will of my Lord so far as I know it. . . . My desire is to go forward, and in His strength to lead clergy and laity nearer to their Lord, and to lead, if it be His Will, His Church to win Essex as a trophy to be laid at His feet'

After this pronouncement, there still remained some misgiving in the minds of an influential section of the clergy, chiefly among those who were accustomed to the use of vestments and incense.

Hearing of this, the bishop summoned a private conference of these clergy, when there was a frank and full discussion of the whole matter.

The bishop, throughout his episcopate, adopted this method of dealing with all matters that were

likely to cause misunderstanding. An interview with the individual priest, or a private conference with groups of his priests, removed any misconception, and enabled bishop and clergy to understand each other, and to appreciate the sincerity of purpose which prompted both in their aspirations.

In the early days of his episcopate such interviews were not rare, but they led to a complete understanding and to mutual trust. The danger zone in regard to controversy within the Church came to have its centre in the question of the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament, and the purpose of such reservation.

In the year 1911, the bishops in the Convocation of Canterbury had formulated their intentions with regard to this matter in a proposed new rubric, which had been issued to the Church in their report. The importance of this question is to be found in the fact that, at the beginning of 1917, a memorial signed by nearly one thousand priests was sent to all the bishops advocating the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament for purposes of adoration. In February 1917, the Bishop of Oxford, Dr. Gore, moved a resolution in the Upper House of the Convocation of Canterbury, confirming what had been enacted in 1911.

‘He proposed simply that they should re-affirm what they had thus repeatedly affirmed, so that the Church might know that their corporate judgment and intention remained what it was, and that, with whatever further definition was found to be necessary, the goal and limit of their effort might be understood of all men—that was,

to allow, when circumstances required it, reservation for the purpose of communicating the sick and for no other purpose whatsoever; that was according to the intention of the ancient and undivided Church, and the present intention of the Eastern Church, but not according to the manner of the Roman Church to-day.' ¹

The Bishop of Chelmsford seconded the resolution of the Bishop of Oxford, and in his subsequent speech said :

' They were apt to forget, after all, that this was the dispensation of the Holy Ghost, and they had to remember that in their English Church the presence of Christ in the Church was always recognized to be through the Holy Ghost, and therefore in his opinion they were at the parting of the ways and they had to make their choice, if he might put it so, quite bluntly, between three things. They had to make their choice between Prayer Book theology and popular theology, and they had to remember that they were not legislating simply for theologians accustomed to fine and subtle distinctions, but they were legislating for the people. . . . Secondly, they had to choose between what he called Catholic and Apostolic doctrine and practice, and that which was purely Roman and Mediæval. . . . Thirdly, they had to choose between the definitely expressed use of the Blessed Sacrament ordered by our Lord and something that was hazy and indistinct and uncertain. . . . He trusted, therefore, in passing that resolution they would do something to preserve the level-headed character of the Church of England, appealing to antiquity, appealing to the Word of God, and going forward to use the Blessed Sacrament for that for which it was really intended, as a centre of unity around which they could all

¹ *The Chronicle of Convocation*, February 1917.

gather, and where from the sacred hands of their Lord they could all receive the bread of life as nourishment to their souls.' ¹

The resolution was carried by the House *nemine contradicente*.

Now that the attitude of the bishops in the southern province was clearly defined, the bishop summoned a small private conference of the priests in the diocese to whom this subject was of direct interest. A frank discussion of the matter gave the bishop the opportunity of ascertaining what was in their minds, and what were their personal desires in the matter. Regarding this question as of paramount importance in the life of the Church, and realizing the possibility of misunderstanding, which would destroy the corporate spirit he was striving to foster in the diocese, the bishop proceeded to invite the whole of his clergy to a private conference. The fact that four hundred clergy accepted the invitation and were present at the Conference Hall, Stratford, on 12th April 1917, showed the widespread interest in this question. The Bishop of Oxford addressed the clergy. This was followed by questions and discussion, and then the bishop of the diocese gave a short address in conclusion. The full report of this Conference was published in book form, entitled *Reservation*, by the Bishops of Oxford and Chelmsford. The bishop sent a copy of this to each of his clergy. Scores of letters received by the bishop testified to the

appreciation of the clergy for this effort of the bishop to understand the minds of his clergy, and to deal with the matter in an unbiased and reasonable manner. The following is typical of such letters :

‘ MY DEAR BISHOP,—It was most kind of you to think of sending me the book relating to the Conference on Reservation, but beyond the gift I welcome it as an evidence of your deep concern, in matters which trouble us, to deal fairly with those who hold opinions differing from your own. Had every bishop in the past laboured to reach the minds of his priests as you are doing, and have done, we should have been in a far happier position than we now are.

‘ May God continue to bless and guide you.

‘ Yours obediently in Christ,

‘ R. STUART KING.’

Following on this Conference, the bishop visited each of the incumbents in whose churches Reservation was practised. He found that public Reservation in the open church in the tabernacle on the altar had been the use in a large number of churches for some years. After a friendly interview, the bishop set forth his directions in regard to the practice of Reservation in the future. These directions are summarized in the bishop’s notes of the interviews as follows :

‘ 1. The Reserved Sacrament must be placed in an Ambry in the north or south wall of the side chapel, subject to my approval of the place before its fixture.

‘ 2. The Reserved Sacrament must be *bona fide* in

both kinds, and the sick person must receive in both kinds.

‘ 3. There must be neither light nor flowers before the Ambry. If there is a Sanctuary light in the accustomed place before the Altar, I do not require its removal.

‘ 4. If the sick person so desire, the service of the Holy Communion for the Sick, as found in the Prayer Book, must be used.

‘ 5. The Ambry door must never be opened except for the purpose of placing the Reserved Sacrament therein, or of taking it directly to the sick.

‘ 6. There must be no service of Benediction, Exposition, nor public devotions of any nature whatever to the Blessed Sacrament.’

By means of these interviews the possibility of misunderstanding and friction was eliminated, and an amicable and satisfactory settlement was arrived at.

In 1917 occurred the only case of disloyalty in regard to such matters. The bishop was compelled to take action. Such action was grossly misrepresented in a document which was widely circulated within the diocese and beyond its borders. The bishop then published a private statement to his clergy, which concluded as follows :

‘ I trust that my clergy recognize by now my keen desire to be fair and impartial, and that I strive to work the diocese as the “ Father in God,” to which position the whole Church has appointed me, but there are limits to toleration, and they have been reached in this parish. I have done all that I could to deal as kindly with the

matters in dispute as possible, and even now no "grants" have been withdrawn, and the women workers are paid as usual. The relations between my clergy and myself have been so cordial that I feel it only right that they should have these facts put clearly before them in order that they may join with me in prayer that these "unhappy divisions" may cease, and that the old Catholic and Apostolic Faith may prevail among us, and that in proclaiming it through the Holy Ghost we may bring men to know, love, and serve our Blessed Lord and Saviour.'

The bishop was much encouraged by the assurances of sympathy and loyalty received from men of all schools of thought during this incident.

On the issue of the form of questions preliminary to his primary visitation in 1920, the bishop received the following letter, signed by twenty-two of his clergy :

'MY LORD BISHOP,—At a meeting of clergy held in London-over-the-Border, grave anxiety was expressed at the questions asked in your visitatorial paper ; and it was unanimously agreed that we should ask you if you would kindly meet us to discuss some questions before we sent in our replies. We are very sorry to trouble you, knowing how pressed you are with work, and that you have other special anxieties at the present time, but realizing how desirous you are not to cause undue anxiety to your clergy we venture to ask you for the meeting.

'We are, yours obediently in Christ.'

The bishop immediately arranged for the meeting, the questions in point were discussed frankly, and the replies to the questions were sent without further hesitation.

In his Visitation Charge the bishop set forth clearly his attitude in regard to Reservation so far as it concerned his own diocese :

‘ I pass to one of the gravest questions on which I shall speak throughout my Visitation, viz. the Reserved Sacrament, and the use to which it may be put. My brethren, I have prayed for guidance on the question, and I believe it has been given. I have sought advice from the wisest in our Church, and I have been in close and friendly consultation with those who desire to reserve. Therefore, the conclusion to which I have come, and the directions which I shall give, are not the result of hasty thinking, but are laid before you after much prayer and earnest thought. May the Holy Spirit direct all our hearts.’ . . .

‘ Therefore it must be clearly understood that Reservation in the diocese can only be allowed when I have been consulted and my directions carried out. Before reserving, I expect every priest to communicate with me as to what my directions are, and then, and then only, to reserve in strict accordance with them. I am acting in full accordance with the Episcopate of the two provinces of Canterbury and York in claiming the sole right to regulate the mode of Reservation and the use to which the Reserved Sacrament is put. The English Episcopate issued last year the following statement : “ If a bishop believes that owing to special conditions it is desirable that a parish priest or other minister should be allowed to go beyond what would, if the rubrics became law, be set forth as the permissible rule or custom in the Church, his action in giving such sanction will be individual and exceptional, and will lie outside what the Episcopate has assented to. Should a bishop so exercise his administrative responsibility, any instruction that he gives either as to the place or manner of such Reservation

should be in accordance with the principle that the Reserved Sacrament is to be used for the Communion of the sick, and for no other purpose whatsoever.

‘After making this public and official statement, I shall naturally expect that my directions will be loyally carried out in the letter and in the spirit.’¹

In such wise the bishop accepted the responsibilities of his office, and exercised the authority committed to him, whilst endeavouring to maintain the catholicity of the Church of England. He enunciated his belief in a speech delivered in July 1917:

‘I believe in the Holy Catholic Church, wherein I was baptized, confirmed, ordained, and consecrated. As bishop therein, I possess full episcopal authority, not by virtue of the nomination of the Crown—that is accidental—but by virtue of my consecration. . . . I believe that the Church of Christ, as the Body of Christ, must seek to be as comprehensive as the heart of her Lord is comprehensive.’

The bishop was an enthusiastic loyalist, and counted it as one of the greatest privileges of his life to preach before their Majesties. By the King’s command, he preached the anniversary sermon on the death of General Gordon at Sandringham Church on 19th January 1914. The King and Queen, Queen Alexandra, the Prince of Wales, the Prince Albert, the Princess Mary, the Prince Henry, and the Prince George were present.

The sermon was preached on the text St. John

¹ *The Church and Her Problems*, pp. 86-88.

vi. 9, 'There is a lad here.' The week-end spent at York Cottage was memorable indeed, and made a very vivid impression on his mind. The conversation naturally turned to the Dominions, for Watts-Ditchfield had recently returned from his C.E.M.S. tour. He was amazed at the King's detailed knowledge of men and movements in his Dominions. The Queen recalled her visit, as Princess of Wales, to St. James-the-Less, Bethnal Green.

It was his happy privilege to preach before their Majesties on two subsequent occasions, 30th April 1916, and 29th April 1917, on both of which he was the guest of their Majesties at Windsor Castle.

In a life of continuous activity, he yet found time to read extensively. He read with a rapidity that was astonishing, and yet so retentive was his memory that each fact found its place therein to be called forth as occasion required. Possessed with a wondrous vitality he was able to do with much less sleep than the average man. It was not unusual for him to read late into the night, or in the early hours of morning. Frequently he would rise at 2 A.M. and go down to his study and do three or four hours' work, and then retire for an hour or two before the actual work of the day began. His range of reading covered theology, politics, biography, and fiction. It was his extensive reading, coupled with his profound knowledge of men, that gave him a ready and intelligent grasp of the movements of his day. His vitality stood him in good stead during the

long and frequent journeys made to all parts of England. After a heavy day's work he would travel all night in the train, carry out a full day's engagements, travel back to London by the night train, and be fresh for the work that awaited him on the following morning. He schooled himself to sleep in any conveyance, and thus husbanded his strength. He likewise had a propensity for writing letters whilst travelling, and innumerable letters were written on his frequent train journeys. It was characteristic of his ability to triumph over difficulties. One evening his chaplain set out from Bishops court to meet him at Shenfield on the last train from London. The fog was so dense that it was impossible to go further than Widford, whence the chaplain returned to Chelmsford. About 5 A.M., the fog having lifted slightly, another attempt was made; but as the car travelled down the drive at Bishops court it was met by a very cheerful bishop. Alighting at Shenfield, and discovering that his car was not there to meet him, the bishop commenced the long walk through the thick fog to Bishops court. He had only proceeded about two miles when a large military lorry overtook him. He hailed the driver and asked for a lift. 'Gladly,' came the response, 'if you are willing to risk your neck. We left London at four o'clock and have taken over eight hours to reach here. Whether we reach Chelmsford or spend the night in a ditch is just a toss-up.' The bishop climbed into the lorry, and made himself as comfortable as possible. It was a cheery journey, every mishap being

treated with the good humour that characterized our troops during the war. The bishop joined in the fun, and, when he descended, thanked his comrades for their kindness. 'We've enjoyed having you, sir.' 'Well, it's not often you can give a poor bishop a lift, is it?' 'Why, who might you be, sir?' 'The Bishop of Chelmsford,' came the reply, as the bishop set out with a brisk step up the hill to Bishops court. 'My hat! some bishop!' was the spontaneous ejaculation.

He was ever ready to help others in distress. On another occasion, he arrived at Chelmsford station at midnight. His car was there to meet him, but, as he was about to enter, he saw an old lady surrounded by luggage. She was much agitated because the car that she expected to meet her had not arrived. There was no taxi at hand, so the bishop placed her in his own car, and sent her off to Danbury, whilst he walked home.

The people of Chelmsford knew of his willingness to help on any and every occasion, and he was regarded as a personal friend by the townsfolk. It was a pleasing thing to walk to the town with the bishop on Boxing Day, as was his custom. Meeting the children he would ask, 'Well, what did Father Christmas bring you?' Then, after a word of cheer he would bestow a friendly pat on the child's head, and with a fervent 'God bless you, my child,' pass on his way. It was a lengthy journey from the point of view of time, but it was a joy to the bishop to share the children's pleasure

during this blessed season. Such acts of sheer pure friendliness endeared him to the hearts of one and all. Tired as he frequently was when he arrived at Chelmsford by the late trains, he always had a cheery word and smile for the ticket-collector and porters. In fact, he was well known up and down the line for his friendly spirit and kindly greetings.

But the secret of his personality and influence was to be found in his childlike and implicit belief in the power of prayer. This is expressed in a letter written by him on 28th August 1917 :

‘ My faith in prayer has grown and developed as the years have rolled by. It has become more simple even as the perplexing problems have become more and more apparent. This may seem a paradox, but it is true. Nothing can shake my faith in my Father’s love, in His care of me, in His willingness to hear me, in the certainty that He will do, and does, all things well. So I just go on remembering all this, and as one and another of my loved ones pass into His presence, I grasp the fact that is contained in the “ I believe in the Communion of Saints.” I think of them with me under the care of the same Father, in the presence of the same Christ, and knit together by the same Holy Spirit.’

If ever a man tried to live in the spirit of prayer it was the first Bishop of Chelmsford. On his death there was found a well-worn notebook, which was always with him in life, and which no other human eye had ever seen. Therein was contained his system of prayer. It was divided into two sections, the first for daily use, and the second

for each day of the week. In the former were the names of those persons for whom he prayed daily. Included in these were his loved ones, personal friends, any guests in the house, his staff of servants, his episcopal colleagues, and, more recently, the Archdeacon of Southend. In the subjects for intercession were the following : For guidance in appointments, in interviews, in letters, and in decisions ; for his engagements during the day ; for the increase of spiritual life in the diocese ; for the avoidance of misunderstanding and dissension of any kind ; for strength to be firm on essentials ; for the parishes of St. James-the-Less, Bethnal Green, and Prittlewell. There was also the daily thanksgiving for general and special blessings.

In the second section, on Sunday, were prayers for the parishes of the diocese ; for priests, deacons, officials, and workers ; for candidates for Holy Orders ; for all services ; for all Nonconformists in the diocese, ministers and people ; for St. Peter's, Upper Holloway ; and for all his former colleagues, clerical and lay. During the days of the week, each deanery, each parish, and each of his clergy attached thereto, were prayed for by name. Each organization and each branch of diocesan work, together with the persons associated therewith, were remembered. It is a most comprehensive list, and tells plainly of the time spent in prayer for the work with which he was entrusted.

The concluding pages are devoted to daily

personal prayers, and reflect the mind and character of the man. The following are extracts therefrom :

‘ For myself—

‘ For forgiveness and cleansing.

‘ Forgiveness for sin in thought, in word, and in deed. Examination in each. Forgiveness for harm done through ignorance, through hasty speech or action. Cleansing through the blood of Christ, and renewal by the Holy Ghost, that I may have the mind of my Lord ; that I may be unselfish ; that *all* self-seeking may be absent ; that in *every* detail I may live for others ; that in thought I may be pure, and at all times kind and generous to others ; that in speech I may not be self-assertive ; that I may be patient when others speak words that are irritating, foolish, and inaccurate.

‘ That in *all* things I may think *only* of the glory of God, the extension of His Kingdom, and the welfare of other people. That I may try to work for peace and goodwill ; that I may strive to understand other people and their point of view ; that I may learn to

(a) Pray more.

(b) Understand and love God more.

(c) Appreciate *all* that the Holy Communion *ought* to mean and convey to me.

(d) Realize at all times the Presence of Christ.

(e) Let the Holy Spirit *direct* and *rule* my heart.

(f) Give my body, soul, and heart wholly to my Lord.

(g) That I may make a firm stand for the Faith as once delivered to the Saints.

‘ That my heart may be *full* of thanksgiving and gratitude to God.

‘ That I may be ever full of a sense of my own unworthiness, and that all I am and have that is any worth, is *all* of God.

‘ Not more than others I deserve,
Yet Thou hast given me more, far more.’

‘ Lord, prepare me for any work which Thou hast yet for me to do.’

‘ I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me.’

‘ This is *all* my hope and *all* my plea,
For me the Saviour died.’

‘ Thee we would be always blessing,
Serve Thee as Thy Hosts above ;
Pray, and praise Thee, without ceasing,
Glory in Thy perfect love.’

The following extract from a letter written on Christmas Eve, 1921, by the late Bishop of Colchester, shortly before his passing, conveys the impression created by personal contact with the bishop through years of fellowship in work, and an experience of his sympathy in hours of suffering :

‘ Though I saw you yesterday I must send just one line to greet you on Christmas morning. May the day be full of the most real happiness to you, the happiness which comes from devotion to the Prince of Peace, and from your constant kindness and thought for others which is founded on that devotion. To me you will ever be just the kindest and tenderest man I have ever known.’

CHAPTER XII

LAST DAYS

AT length that which had been predicted at the enthronement of the bishop on St. George's Day, 1914, was accomplished. The bishop was enthroned in the hearts of his people, both clergy and laity alike. The Synod had removed any trace of lingering doubt or suspicion. It was with complete confidence and absolute loyalty that the whole diocese looked forward to the future under the guidance of their beloved bishop. More than nine years of personal touch with their leader had taught them that he was in very truth the Father in God of the whole diocese, and not of any particular section or school of thought. The justice of his actions, the impartiality with which he had made his appointments, the sympathy and interest manifested in the work of each of his clergy, irrespective of the form of churchmanship, and the fatherly spirit shown to all, had brought forth the natural response of love and confidence. His manner of summoning the Synod, the opportunity afforded to each school of thought to express its particular aspect of the truth, the encouragement to speak freely on points of difference, and the spirit in which the Synod was guided and inspired, constituted the

crowning act of his episcopal life. The *Church Times* of 1st June 1923, commenting on the effects of the Synod, says :

‘The Church in the county of Essex, which has suffered many changes of relation to a see-city, forms a very representative diocese, with its industrial areas, its large proportion of quiet country parishes, and its string of coastal pleasure resorts. The “High Church School” has never basked in the fostering sunshine of episcopal favour; though in recent years it has not only received justice and toleration, but fatherly kindness.’

The Church in Essex was now conscious of a corporate unity. Men of all types and temperaments were to be found therein; many and varied were the uses in the churches thereof; men of every school of thought made their contribution to the common life; but the barrier of narrow bigotry and party suspicion which so often divides parish from parish and priest from priest had been effectually removed. There was the family spirit, and the family life; and the means, under God, in the creation and in the fostering of these were the feelings of love and confidence with which each member of the family looked upon their Father in God.

The bishop had been in indifferent health for some weeks, and the strain of the Synod had not conduced to any improvement in his physical condition. Nevertheless, on Tuesday, 12th June 1923, he received the King and Queen at the Bishop Stevens’ Memorial Church at Becontree,

and on the following day had much business to transact. On the morning of Thursday, 14th June, the bishop sent for his medical adviser. After consultation with him, he proceeded to London, where he became subjected to such acute pain that, in the late afternoon, he went to see a medical friend in Harley Street. He immediately summoned a specialist, who diagnosed the case as one of acute appendicitis, and sent him to a nursing home in Beaumont Street, with a view to an operation on the same evening. This was subsequently found to be unnecessary. The bishop remained in the home till the following Monday, when he returned by car to Bishops-court. Absolute rest was essential, and all engagements were cancelled. After consultation, it was decided to allow the bishop, at his urgent request, to attend the meeting of the House of Bishops on 4th July, and then to return to the nursing home for an operation on 10th July. It was felt that there might be a recurrence of the trouble at a less favourable time, and in view of the bishop's proposed visit early in the following year to Jamaica, on the occasion of the centenary of the founding of the Church there, the specialist strongly advised that the appendix should be removed. The news of the bishop's illness, following so soon after the Synod, caused considerable anxiety, and many were the letters received of sympathy and of assurance that the prayers of the diocese would be offered on his behalf. This universal demonstration of affection touched the bishop deeply, and was a source

of great comfort to him in the unexpected trial through which he was passing. The bishop's strength gradually returned, and he was able to walk quietly in the garden that he loved, but he was not idle. Papers and letters were gone through, and everything placed in order. It was a bitter disappointment to him that he was unable to preside at the Annual Conference of the C.E.M.S. to be held at Leamington on 19th June.

The following extract from an article in the *Church Times* of 15th June expresses the bishop's desire to further the spiritual interests of the Conference :

‘ It is no easy thing to follow such a predecessor as the Archbishop of York, but the Bishop of Chelmsford brings to the task many special and excellent gifts, some of which the Society greatly needs to-day, and he already possesses in a wonderful degree the affection and loyal sympathy of its members at home and overseas. In a characteristic message to the Society, the bishop expresses his earnest desire “ that this Conference should be distinguished for its spiritual atmosphere and results,” and asks that there may be a celebration of the Holy Communion in every parish throughout England in which there is a branch of the C.E.M.S. on Wednesday morning next at 7.30, “ the same time as we at Leamington are kneeling together at the Holy Table, that thus the whole Society may seek together for the Bread of Life, and plead for a blessing upon our work.” It is a fine desire, and one would fain hope that the more than 1700 priests in England and Wales who alone can make its fulfilment possible will rise to that high ideal.’

From his bed he wrote the following letter, which was read at the Conference :

‘ From my previous letters you will realize that I am passing through one of the most grievous disappointments I have ever experienced. I had looked forward to the coming Conference with so much interest, trusting that, by God’s blessing, I might have been able to take part in it, and help forward our great movement. But no man is indispensable, and I am here, dictating this letter. Please convey my real and heartfelt regret to the Conference.’

The bishop then dealt with the matter of finance, and proceeded :

‘ I am sorry to have to refer to finance, for after all what is wanted is a really spiritual movement. If I had had the privilege of meeting you face to face, I should have striven to ask each man present to answer the questions, “ What am I really worth to the Church of God ? ” “ Am I an asset as far as prayer, spiritual life, and spiritual work are concerned ? ” “ Would the Church be much weaker if I left her ranks ? ” It is only in this way we shall get a revival of the whole corporate body, by each individual member making up his mind in this Conference that, by God’s grace, he will pray more, live a more Christ-like life, and above all, put before himself as his great objective the winning of his brother-men to Christ. I ask for your prayers. I can assure you that throughout the Conference you will be in my thoughts, as the agenda lies on my bed. I shall commend you, from time to time, to the Giver of all wisdom and power.’

The special representative of the *Church Times*, in his report of the Conference in the issue of 22nd June, writes :

' Societies, like individuals, have their moments of ill fortune, and certainly the Men's Society in this week of its annual Conference has been hit pretty badly. As was intimated in these columns last week, this was to have been essentially the Bishop of Chelmsford's occasion, when, after the immense spade-work he has been doing in so many parts of the country for the Society, he was, as Chairman, to preside over the annual Conference for the first time. But this was not to be, for at the end of last week, after a long period of intense activity within and without his diocese, the bishop had to give up, and upon being taken to hospital appendicitis was diagnosed. Now he is at his home, resting preparatory to the operation which will take place in a few weeks' time. To those who have followed his Lordship's activities during the past year it is hardly surprising that the immense strain to which he has subjected himself has ended thus. For the C.E.M.S., the bishop has addressed twenty great meetings of men in as many centres of England and Wales, and has nearly always spoken to large gatherings of clergy also on these occasions. And he has never spared himself, but given of his energy and strength to the utmost. All this, and much more, in addition to the huge and constant work of a diocese containing 1,356,000 souls, and problems greater than are to be found in any other diocese. This untoward happening at the moment of the Society's great gathering has excited the real sorrow of its members, and elicited wonderful and touching evidence of the deep affection in which the bishop is held, and the anxiety and prayer with which his lordship's illness is followed. If, after that recovery which is so earnestly desired, and the rest that must follow, the bishop takes considerably more care of himself, his best friends will feel happier about him than they have done of late. Indeed, his breakdown may prove to have been a blessing in disguise.'

With dauntless courage, considering the weakness that accompanied his illness, and the necessity for husbanding his strength for the operation that was to take place within a week, the bishop attended the meeting of the House of Bishops on Wednesday, 4th July, and moved a resolution for the reform of Church Courts. He had been a keen student of the subject for many years, and was desirous of reform as one means of promoting peace within the borders of the Church. In May 1920, the bishop had received the unanimous support of the Upper House of Convocation in the province of Canterbury to his resolution on the reform of the Ecclesiastical Courts. Now he moved his resolution in the House of Bishops; in order that a measure might be introduced into the National Assembly for reconstituting the Diocesan and Provincial Courts, and the Court of Final Appeal.

The House, knowing his physical weakness, and admiring the courage that enabled him to speak with such power, listened with sympathetic interest to what proved to be the last speech they were to hear from him. The following summary in the *Times* of 5th July shows the bishop's line of reasoning :

‘ He said he moved his resolution as part of a scheme for the restoration of order, discipline, authority, and, he hoped, peace in the Church. In the chain of peace he thought there were five links, each of which required to be carefully forged. First, there must be revision of the Prayer Book in a generous, broad, and tolerant spirit, but consistent with the doctrines of the Church.

This should be followed by a reform of the Ecclesiastical Courts, bringing them into harmony with the feeling of the Church, and making them more acceptable generally to the Church at large. There must be a restoration of Diocesan Synods, bringing bishops and clergy in closer touch with each other, and a thorough revision of the Canons, as the present Canon law was in a state of utter disrepute. Before they got any real peace and order in the Church of England there must be an investigation as to the authority for the *jus liturgicum* of the Episcopate, and upon what principles it ought to be exercised. Authority must be vindicated, and discipline restored. That was of paramount importance. The whole world was seething with undisciplined minds, and the Church ought to be an example and guide to the world in the matter of authority and discipline. Unfortunately it was the very reverse. Some of the clergy were deliberately flouting authority, and seeking to break it down, but he believed that the overwhelming mass of them, even though they might break the law, had not a lawless mind. The existing machinery was largely discredited. The Church was heartily sick of the present conditions.'

The resolution was carried *nem. con.*, and it was decided to ask the two archbishops to invite the National Assembly to appoint a committee to prepare a measure for consideration. The bishop, before returning to Chelmsford, experienced an irresistible desire to visit his old parish of Bethnal Green, where he had tea at the vicarage with some of his oldest friends in the parish. It was a visit that was much appreciated as another manifestation of his love for the parish ; but none of those present realized that it was the last occa-

sion on which they were to meet their old vicar in this life. Returning to Bishops court, the remaining days before the operation were spent quietly in his home.

The bishop showed the same alert interest in matters concerning the national life, and was continuously thinking of the diocese and preparing plans for its future. On the morning of Sunday, 8th July, the bishop celebrated for the last time in the chapel at Bishops court. In the late afternoon of the same day, he went quietly by motor to the nursing home in Beaumont Street in preparation for the operation. It was with the full hope of recovery that he left Bishops court, and it was with childlike faith and confidence in the God who had so richly blessed his life that he faced the operation. There was not the slightest fear nor misgiving. On the evening of Monday, 9th July, the most severe thunderstorm experienced for many years broke over London, and so continuous were the crashes of thunder, and the vivid flashes of lightning, that sleep was impossible. Many, including his loved ones, were in doubt as to whether the surgeon would consider it advisable to proceed with the operation in view of the bishop's disturbed night. But, on Tuesday morning, 10th July, he walked into the operating room, and when all was in readiness for the operation, prayed that God might guide and bless all concerned.

The surgeon was quite satisfied with the operation, and as there were no complications, he anticipated that there would be a speedy recovery.

The news of the successful performance of the operation came as a great relief to the innumerable friends of the bishop. In the great majority of the churches in the diocese, and in very many outside its borders, there had been special intercessions at the celebrations of the Holy Communion, and it was with thanksgiving that the news was received. The Anglo-Catholic Congress was held in London on that morning, and 'a beautiful letter from the Bishop of Chelmsford was read, regretting his inability to visit the Congress on account of ill health, and a telegram announcing that he had passed through his operation successfully inspired a united act of thanksgiving,' as the *Church Times* reports in its issue of 13th July. The following is the text of the letter :

BISHOPSCOURT, CHELMSFORD,
' 30th June 1923.

' MY DEAR MR. WILSON,—I had hoped to be present at some of the sessions of the Congress, but this cannot be, for I expect to undergo my operation on the very day on which it meets. I am, however, venturing to assure you that you will be in my thoughts and prayers.

' I should be false to you and to myself if I did not say frankly that, on some points, there is a great gulf between us and concerning which I am in no small anxiety. I am a convinced Evangelical, but on my sick-bed I am striving to look at you, may I say it without presumption, as my Blessed Lord is looking at you, and to view you in His mind and in His spirit. I believe that I see in the Albert Hall a band of men and women whose hearts are full of devotion to their Saviour, and who in their lives show forth the fruits of His redemption and who yearn

for Him to reign on the earth. By His grace, the spiritual life of the whole Church has been enriched by you. Of this there can be no doubt. The Cross is the centre of your faith and message, and therein lies your strength. Forgive my adding this. Let your Congress turn to the deep things of God which are the inheritance of all God's children. Leave in these perilous days all secondary matters alone. They can wait. The King Himself has waited far too long for the whole-hearted consecration of His disciples to His great work.

'With all my heart I send, with loving affection, a real "God bless you." May the Presence of the Blessed Master be realized by you all. May the Holy Spirit fill you all, and may the Triune God bless you so mightily that from your Congress you may emerge as a great army with one objective, and one only, to make the kingdoms of this world the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. God indeed be with you all.

'I shall greatly value your prayer for myself and my wife.

'Ever affectionately yours in Christ,

'J. E. CHELMSFORD.'

Inquiries and messages of sympathy were received from far and wide. The bishop much appreciated the gracious act of their Majesties, who sent the following telegram, on Thursday, 12th July, from Holyrood Palace :

'The King and Queen are sorry to hear that the Bishop of Chelmsford has had an operation, and sincerely hope that he is making good progress towards recovery.

'STAMFORDHAM.'

It was with appreciative gratitude that he heard of the inquiry of Princess Mary, Viscountess

Lascelles, and received Her Highness's gift of growing roses.

The after effects of the anæsthetic were most distressing, and were detrimental to a speedy and satisfactory recovery. The intense heat, due to the abnormal heat wave that passed over the country, and the continuous noise of London's traffic, which was more pronounced owing to the open windows essential to secure such air as was available, were likewise antagonistic to recovery. On the Thursday there were disquieting symptoms, and the bishop passed a very uncomfortable day. In spite of much discomfort it was with the shadow of the well-known smile that the bishop was true to himself in his attempt to be bright and cheerful. The evening's bulletin was more reassuring. Friday passed slowly, and the bishop's wife felt grave anxiety as to his condition. It was for sleep that the tired and exhausted mind and body of the bishop craved; it was for sleep that his loved ones prayed earnestly, in response to the oft-repeated request, 'Pray that I may sleep.' It was the inability to sleep that distressed the bishop most. Loving friends did all in their power to create the conditions essential to sleep. In response to their representations, the police diverted the traffic. But even so, the sleep that would mean so much to the patient came not. On the Friday evening, although the surgeon's bulletin was of a hopeful nature, Mrs. Watts-Ditchfield was seriously alarmed. His old colleague, the Rev. E. A. Dunn, Vicar of Harlesden, was sent for, and he spent the

night at the home, only leaving when Mrs. Watts-Ditchfield arrived in the morning. In the very early hours of Saturday morning, 14th July, the bishop asked the sister in attendance to lift him from his pillows, whilst he thanked God for all His goodness. At 3 A.M. the bishop spoke in intimate and affectionate terms to his old and beloved colleague, and then lapsed into unconsciousness, from which he never fully recovered. Mrs. Watts-Ditchfield, unable to rest owing to her grave anxiety, went very early to the home, and was shocked to see the condition of her husband.

Alarmed at her mother's disquieting report, the bishop's daughter and her husband motored to London early on that Saturday morning.

In the presence of his nearest and dearest, with the commendatory prayer just offered, the soul of the bishop passed peacefully into the nearer Presence at 8.45 on Saturday morning, 14th July 1923. Courageous to the last, his faith never faltered, and it was as a tired and exhausted but loving and trustful child that the bishop entered into rest.

Wholly unprepared for such a contingency, the news created universal consternation, for the impression created by the reports was one of hopefulness that the bishop was progressing slowly towards convalescence. A telephone message to Lambeth Palace brought the Archbishop of Canterbury in person to the telephone. His Grace seemed unable to grasp the fact that the bishop had actually passed away. With the thoughtful kindness that had ever marked the

archbishop's attitude towards the bishop, he arranged to be present at the funeral in the cathedral on Thursday, 19th July.

The expression of love for the bishop, and of sympathy with his loved ones, was universal, and letters and telegrams came from all sources, demonstrating the catholicity of the bishop's influence and of his friendships.

Mrs. Watts-Ditchfield received the following royal message :

‘ HOLYROOD PALACE,
‘ 15th July.

‘ The Queen and I are distressed to hear of the great sorrow which has befallen you, and assure you of our heartfelt sympathy.

‘ We had known the Bishop of Chelmsford for many years, and regarded him with feelings of friendship and respect.

‘ His loss will be mourned both in his diocese and by a vast number of men and women who have benefited by his teaching and example.

‘ (Signed) GEORGE R. I.’

In response to a message on that Saturday morning, the bishop's robes were brought from Bishops court, and it was the sad but sacred privilege of the domestic chaplain who had robed him for the great service of Consecration in St. Paul's Cathedral, on St. Matthias' Day, 1914, to robe his dead leader for the last solemn office. On Sunday evening, 15th July, the body of the bishop was brought to Bishops court, where it was received by the robed clergy of Chelmsford and the neighbouring parishes, and borne to the chapel, where

a service of reception was held. Here, in the quietness of the little chapel that he loved, the body of the bishop rested in state, with the three lighted candles on either side. The daily celebrations of the Holy Communion were a source of comfort and strength to his loved ones. On the Wednesday evening, just before nightfall, a simple yet dignified procession, composed of the churchwardens of the cathedral, of Springfield, and of Moulsham, the mayor and deputy-mayor of the borough, and the robed clergy of the city, preceded by the processional cross, conveyed the body of the bishop from Bishops court to the cathedral. The massive coffin of unpolished oak, surmounted by the bishop's pastoral staff, and a small wreath of lilies of the valley, was borne on a wheeled bier, and was escorted by six of the clergy ordained by the bishop, as bearers. Immediately behind the bier walked the bishop's domestic chaplain, and his son-in-law, followed by some of his Bethnal Green curates.

The scene was impressive, as the procession passed slowly down the hill which the bishop had traversed so frequently. It was a perfect summer evening, and the sun, setting in glorious splendour, was suggestive of the beauty of life's eventide to the faithful Christian warrior. The thoughts of many turned to the words of the hymn which seemed so suited to the occasion :

' The golden evening brightens in the West ;
 Soon, soon to faithful warriors comes their rest ;
 Sweet is the calm of Paradise the blest,
 Alleluia.'

The blinds of all the houses were drawn and the route was lined with people standing silently, the men bare-headed, desirous of paying a last tribute of respect to one whom they had learned to love. In the square outside the cathedral was an immense crowd, the silence and evident signs of deep emotion presenting a striking contrast to the joy of the vast concourse of people who had assembled there on St. George's Day, 1914, when the bishop came to his cathedral for the first time. At the entrance to the churchyard, the cathedral choir, with the Cross at their head, and accompanied by sidesmen, met the procession and led the way along the pathway to the west door of the cathedral. Many people had assembled in the churchyard and its precincts, and stood with bowed heads as the body of their bishop was taken for the last time into his cathedral. Meanwhile, the rector read the opening sentences of the Burial Office. On entering the cathedral the glad note of triumphant joy which is the Christian's reply to the challenge of death, sounded forth as choir and congregation joined in the Easter hymn :

' Jesus lives ! no longer now
Can thy terrors, death, appal us ;
Jesus lives ! by this we know
Thou, O grave, canst not enthrall us.
Alleluia ! '

It was in accordance with the bishop's wish, written some time before his death, that this hymn was chosen. The whole service to be used had been drawn up by him, so that it should not be

one of sadness and gloom, but one of thanksgiving and hope ; for was not ' death but the gate of life immortal ' !

During the singing of the hymn, the procession passed up the centre aisle of the cathedral, and that which was earthly of the bishop was borne within the sanctuary before the High Altar, there to lie in state till the morrow. The bishop's pectoral cross and ring were placed one on either side of the pastoral staff on the coffin. The service that followed was simple in character, but deeply impressive. At its conclusion there was an impromptu demonstration of the people's feelings towards their bishop. The congregation filed reverently past the coffin, and silently dispersed, whilst in the cathedral, by the subdued light of the six candles surrounding the bier, the men of the cathedral kept silent vigil by the body of their bishop.

On the morning of Thursday, 19th July, there were celebrations of the Holy Communion, the last of which was for the loved ones of the bishop. Previous to the funeral, a full muffled peal of the cathedral bells rang out its sad message to a sorrowing people.

The congregation assembled in reverent silence, and consisted of the official representatives of the various phases of public life in the county, and those beyond, who had had a share in the bishop's life. Shortly before the time for commencing the service, the first procession entered the cathedral, and the mayors and town clerks of the Essex boroughs and of Bethnal Green took their

allotted places. The second procession was composed of the robed clergy of the diocese, and the representatives of the Nonconformist bodies. This was followed by the cathedral choir and clergy, the canons of the cathedral, the honorary and examining chaplains of the bishop, the Archdeacon of Southend, the Bishops of Barking and Colchester, and the Bishops of London, St. Albans, St. Edmundsbury, and Ipswich, Bangor and Nassau. The Archbishop of Canterbury, preceded by his domestic chaplain bearing the crosier, and followed by six honorary chaplains, was in the rear of this procession. When the family representatives had taken their places, the service was begun, the Psalms being 121 and 150. After the reading of the Lesson, the bishop's favourite hymn, 'Love Divine, all loves excelling,' was sung, and then the Archbishop of Canterbury advanced to the steps of the altar and said :

' Brothers and Sister in the Lord, you will feel with me that this is no occasion for many words. We meet to-day for thanksgiving—"Te Deum Laudamus," not "Miserere," is the note that swells from our hearts—thanksgiving for a life of unremitting service to God and to his fellow-men ; prayer that rich fruitfulness may be vouchsafed to the seed that he has sown, to the lives that he has nurtured, and that we may be allowed to bear our part in bringing those tasks to perfection—the fruition for which he prayed ; and prayer for those who knew and loved him best, and from whom he has parted for a little while. And then resolve, firm resolve, please God, that that brave example shall not be without fruit in our several lives. For that it is, we are here, and memories—

rich memories—shape themselves into sure and certain hope.

‘When we try to measure the value of the great life that has ended here, our thoughts, I think, should rightly go back to the simplest basis of it all. What was the basic principle—what were the large lines upon which this life we are appraising was founded and carried on? Did the life we are considering realize that great principle?’

‘When we are speaking of one who bore the great bishop’s office, we turn back simply and naturally to the consecration day—to the office in our ordinal and the note it strikes. For a bishop what is the outstanding purport of the life as it is there set forth alike in prayer, in injunction, and in promise? It is primarily—and we often forget how fully it is—the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, out of the Scriptures placed in our hands. Then it is the nurture of the weak—the winning of the wayward who may be around us. Then it is the comprehensive care for all sorts and conditions of men with whom we have to do. Could we better strike what were the prevailing ideals and their fulfilment in the life for which we are thanking God to-day—the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the ministry of His Word to the souls of men?’

‘Back to the great days in Bethnal Green, when that Gospel, as he gave it, wrought such wonders in a region which needed all the help and which finds it still. Then the message for a brief time overseas to the great cities of Empire. I have reason to know how to this very day the message he bore to those great cities lives and bears fruit still. And then ten years’ fruitful episcopate. All the thoughts that I have mentioned—the preaching of the Gospel, the tending of the weak, and the winning of the wayward, comprehensive care for and sympathy with all—you have known what those years

have meant. You can appraise their value now. They went slowly, gradually at first, and then at last there was a great flow. They won the love and care of men; hearts have been opened by the message of a good man rightly told, untiringly delivered, and fearlessly set forth in the truth as he held it.

‘There is a striking phrase in the bishop’s ordinal, to minister with ‘all patience and doctrine.’ Patience and doctrine—take that combination and it gives us something like the keynote of his work in life. He has passed to his reward, and, as we believe, with larger opportunities of work, in fields greater than our own. Remember him who had the rule over you, who has spoken unto you the Word of God, whose faith was Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Let us give thanks. It is meet and right so to do.’

As the procession left the cathedral, the hymn, ‘Praise to the Holiest in the height,’ was sung. The body was escorted by six bearers, five of whom were the bishop’s Bethnal Green colleagues, and the sixth the Vicar of St. Peter’s, Upper Holloway. Passing out of the cathedral, under the ancient tower, through the great west door, where the bishop had sought for admission on the day of his enthronement, the procession moved slowly towards the open grave, where the bishop, at his own request, and by permission of the Home Office, was to be laid to rest within the shadow of his cathedral. The hymn, ‘Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us,’ was sung, the introductory prayer offered, and the pastoral staff removed from the coffin. The body was then lowered to its last resting-place, amid a silence that could be felt, and which was fraught with intensity of

feeling. Standing with his crosier in his hand, the archbishop pronounced the solemn words of committal. The prayers, 'O Eternal Lord God, who holdest all souls in life,' and 'O God of the spirits of all flesh,' were offered, the *Nunc Dimittis* chanted, and the archbishop recited the sixteenth-century collect, peculiarly fitting to this memorable service: 'O Lord, support us all the day long of this troubelous life, until the shades lengthen and the evening comes, the buisy world is hushed, the fever of life is over, and our work done. Then, Lord, in Thy mercy, grant us safe lodgeing, a holy rest, and peace at the last.'

After the archbishop had pronounced the Benediction, the Doxology, 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow,' was sung, characteristically in accordance with the bishop's wish.

'Then we dispersed,' as the editor wrote in the *Diocesan Chronicle* for August 1923, 'and from the cathedral tower the bells rang out a half-muffled peal, so suggestive of the blending of life's triumph with life's tears. A belated train service took us upon our homeward ways. All had been orderly, dignified, restrained. Behind and below these decencies was the genuine sense of loss, real regret that we shall see his face and hear his words no more, the recognition that a leader of unusual qualities had been taken from his high office and gone elsewhere.'

At the same hour memorial services were held in St. James-the-Less, conducted by the Bishop of Stepney, and attended by Lord Stamfordham, representing His Majesty, and in the crypt chapel

of St. Paul's Cathedral. The latter service was arranged by the C.E.M.S., who mourned the loss of their chairman.

In the cathedral, and in many churches throughout the diocese, similar services were held on the same evening. Tributes of affection and respect, paid in countless pulpits in the British Isles and overseas, were a remarkable testimony to a remarkable life.

The world is the poorer for his passing. Few men possess the magnetic personality of John Edwin Watts-Ditchfield: a personality which enabled him to inspire others with an enthusiasm for service; an enthusiasm for service that prepared men for sacrifice; an enthusiasm that bridged the gulf of party difference, and united men of all temperaments, and of all schools of thought, in a common desire to go forward as 'one army of the living God,' to assist in winning the world for Christ.

From the human standpoint it seemed that such a man could ill be spared from the forefront of life's battle; 'For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.'

But he, being dead, yet speaketh. His impassioned love for souls, and his life, wholly devoted to the service of God and of his fellow-man, are a challenge to others to embark upon the great adventure, to help to light the torch of Christian love throughout the world, to dare to follow where he so courageously led the way.

By the path of sacrifice he passed out of the sight of the living ; but in a rarer, purer atmosphere and in higher fields of service, as was his belief in life, he serves to-day. Of this we may be certain that, so far as God permits, his spiritual influence is with us, and that his prayers, free from the weariness and limitations of the flesh, ascend in the nearer Presence for the work that he loved on earth, and for which he so freely gave his life

‘ But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three ; and the greatest of these is love.’

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